

# Sports Illustrated

JANUARY 27, 1976

15 CENTS

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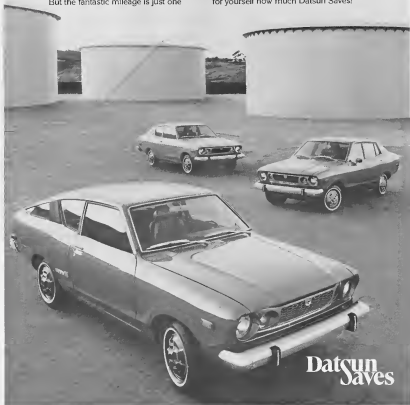
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**Datsun**  
Saves

# CONTENTS

JANUARY 27, 1975 Volume 42, No. 4

Cover photograph by Walter Iooss Jr.

## 30 New Look on an Old Shore

Revelations are in store for even the crustiest crustacean on Cancún, an island off Yucatán where a vast resort complex, masterminded by the Mexican government, is going up. Less complex is the 1975 swimwear, the designers have done their utmost to maximize the minimum.

by Jule Campbell and  
Jerry Kirschenbaum

## 10 Play Ball, Bill Walton

For weeks the rookie sat on the bench, banking paychecks and attending people  
by Rick Telander

## 16 Hockey Is Courting Disaster

Dave Forbes' indictment in Minnesota threatens to put the sport on trial  
by Mark Mulvey

## 18 In Pursuit of Higher Earnings

Stev Smith, the former hot tamale of Minors, takes a Mexican cream course  
by Joe Jares

## 24 He Has the Word from Sicily

When Nick Mileti offers his old-country maxims, three pro teams pay attention  
by Jerry Kirschenbaum

## 52 Run It Up a Little

Don Laseter, who made a fortune in food, may do the same in horse racing  
by Frank Deford



Arnold Roth

## The departments

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 7 Scorecard           | 50 Skiing         |
| 44 College Basketball | 65 For the Record |
| 46 Horse Racing       | 68 19th Hole      |

Credits on page 65

## Next Week

WHO'RE THE HOOSIERS? No. 1 in basketball, Indiana is beating foes by 25 points and ravaging the Big Ten, though no player—not even hot Scott May—is as famous as its coach. Curry Kirkpatrick reports.

THE JOHNNY MILLER SHOW moves on to the Crosby at Pebble Beach, where Jack Nicklaus, in his 1975 debut, hopes to upstage his young rival. Dan Jenkins writes his review from a front-row seat.

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED is published weekly except the week a year and by Time Inc. Sports Co. (ISSN 0034-5295). Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes in U.S. to Sports Illustrated, P.O. Box 518, Hightstown, N.J. 08520. Outside the U.S., send to: Sports Illustrated, P.O. Box 518, Hightstown, N.J. 08520. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes in U.S. to Sports Illustrated, P.O. Box 518, Hightstown, N.J. 08520. Outside the U.S., send to: Sports Illustrated, P.O. Box 518, Hightstown, N.J. 08520.



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# SCORECARD

Edited by ANDREW CRICKTON

## NCAA CONVENTION II

The ineffectiveness of the National Collegiate Athletic Association in dealing with inflation and women's sports (SCORECARD, Jan. 20) overshadowed several positive accomplishments of the recent convention. The most noteworthy concerned the fate of coaches who sin and run and of schools and bowl committees that commit themselves prematurely.

Dr. Stephen Horn, president of Long Beach State and leader of a vocal group of college officials who seem determined to play a more active role in athletics, spearheaded a campaign that resulted in a rule aimed at straying coaches. From now on, with the concurrence of the NCAA, an institution can bar a former coach from employment at another school for up to two years if he was responsible for placing his old school on probation.

Bowl commitments of any sort will be prohibited until the third Saturday in November. A college violating that date can be barred for two years from bowl games, and a transgressing bowl must surrender 30% of its share of the game's gross receipts.

Walter Byers, executive director of the NCAA, thought the convention's chief accomplishments came in the areas of recruiting and enforcement. The organization's investigative staff was increased from five to 13, including eight full-time field agents. Regulations were adopted requiring athletes and coaches to make annual declarations of rules compliance—false declarations will lead to stiff penalties—and forbidding contacts with high school athletes before the end of their junior years. But legislation to restrict a high school athlete to four paid campus visits and to limit to three the number of visits a recruiter may make to see a prospect was turned down. So was a move insisting on satisfactory scholastic progress by athletes, NCAA members holding that this would be an invasion of the academic province, as though the 1.6 rule for admittance to college was not.

The effectiveness of all this will depend upon the will of the NCAA to administer the new rules firmly. "Concurrence" on the banning of coaches can become a convenient out rather than a means to help bring them to account for their actions. And the refusal of the convention to go further in relieving recruiting pressure on high school students does little to help even an enlarged staff of investigators, who must police 691 colleges and some 121,259 athletes in seven major sports. The most promising news out of the convention was the increased participation of college administrators. It is time they took a more responsible interest in athletic policy.

## STILL A GOOD STORY

Blame the computer again. A recheck by the *Daily Racing Form* revealed that Jockey Chris McCarron's world record should be 546 winners in a year, not 547. The error occurred before Chris passed Sandy Hawley's mark of 515, so scratch that heart-lugging story of having to catch brother Gregg in the stretch to get the record, and our sympathies to father Herbert, who missed the record-breaking race. One last note, though. When Chris finally did now ahead of Hawley on Dec. 17, his horse's name was *Après Vous*—or *After You*.

## OH, PIONEERS!

Among the casualties of the fierce blizzard that struck the Midwest two weeks back were a women's basketball tournament in Omaha and a lecture scheduled by the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul. The national teams of the Republic of China, Mexico and Canada showed up for first-round play all right. It was John F. Kennedy College, the tournament sponsor, that couldn't make the scene. It was snowed in at Wabon, 35 miles away. The school might have benefited from the Minnesota lecture had that been given. The topic: "How to Survive in Winter."

## MELDING FOR MARRIAGE

"Good night, dear," say the 10 smiling wives, and the boys from Yankton, S. Dak. are off to their twice-monthly pinochle game. When they get home in the wee hours, the wives are still smiling. "How much did you lose?" a wife might ask sweetly. When hubby tells her \$10, she is apt to utter "Whee!" and drop back into a contented sleep. This could be a turning point in domestic relations.

It all began when a judge, an auctioneer, two lawyers, two accountants and four Yankton businessmen got this great idea. They'd play for a dollar a game, a dollar a set and fine themselves for arriving late or for not showing up at all. No excuses accepted. At evening's end wan-



ners make nothing, losers cheerfully toss their cash into a pot that is banked in a savings account. When enough cash is raised, they plan a trip for the wives, like the one this year to the Nebraska-Florida Sugar Bowl game, which the women had been pining to see.

Admittedly, the plan needs work before it is ready for national distribution. For instance, to finance the trip for 20 to New Orleans it took five years. But what's a little time when you've got a good thing going?

## FOR OPENERS

Deane Beman, commissioner of the pro golf tour, got the year off on a less than triumphant note two weeks ago, threatening reprisal if this country's leading players insist on running off every summer

continued

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined  
That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.



Longer...  
yet  
milder



# Pall Mall Gold 100's

18 mg. "tar", 1.4 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Oct. '78.

mer to play the British Open. Unless agreements can be reached, he said, "sheet of recommending that we do not embrace the British Open, we are searching for the best possible solution that will be fair to our U.S. sponsors."

Doubtless, Berman was responding to pressure. Sponsors of the Milwaukee, Quad Cities (Iowa) and Pleasant Valley (Mass.) tournaments are rightfully upset that big-name players such as Jack Nicklaus and Johnny Miller leave early for Britain and come back late, missing all three U.S. events. Berman hinted that he might make either the tournament before the Open—Milwaukee—or the one after—Pleasant Valley—a designated event, thereby commanding the presence of all leading U.S. players, including Nicklaus and Miller.

The solution, if Berman is serious about it, could lead to outright warfare with the pros, who, bless their mercenary souls, approach the British Open with mixed feelings of adventure and veneration. Their chances of arriving home with more than a few bob in their pockets have been slim, but for once it is enough that they have been a part of the tradition of this oldest of international tournaments.

Golf would be better served if there was a mid-tour break that allowed those who are qualified a leisurely trip abroad with practice time to adjust to Britain's special conditions, and then some breathing space after the Open to tour a cathedral or two. Milwaukee and Pleasant Valley can be pushed back or forward a week, tournaments for the three-week hiatus can be devised. What little sacrifice is involved will be more than offset by the continuation of the British Open as one of the four major golf events of the year, with a history that can be savored when tournaments of lesser acquaintance have been long forgot.

#### A LEG TO STAND ON

You may remember Spanish Riddle, the 4-year-old thoroughbred whose right foreleg was amputated 15 months ago (SCORECARD, Dec. 17, 1973). We are happy to report he is alive and well and standing at stud in Virginia, and the first of his progeny is due to be foaled this week. Dr. Edward Keeler, the orthopedic surgeon who performed the unusual operation, bought a farm near Spanish Riddle's new home and hopes to be present for the happy occasion.

It hasn't been entirely smooth sailing

since the amputation, but with everyone cooperating—especially the horse, which docilely let doctors and trainers handle his sore leg and willingly essayed various artificial hoofs—the operation has been a success. Spanish Riddle now wears a high-laced boot, but moves with ease and serviced 26 mares last year. He has become so much of a favorite at Virginia Siallon Station, where the foal is to be born, that a statue of a horse in the office sports a boot on its right foreleg.

#### VOWELUABLE TRIVIA

The only active major-leaguer with all five vowels in his first name is who? Aurelio Rodriguez, Detroit infielder. Next question.

#### COUNTING THE WOMEN

Tom Thacker, the clever defensive guard who led the University of Cincinnati to two NCAA basketball titles in the early '60s and then played seven seasons in the pros, has returned to his alma mater to coach the sport. His players are not called Bearcats, though. They are the Bearkittens, Cincinnati's women's varsity.

There may be a trend afoot. Former UCLA All-America Kenay Washington recently directed the Bruin women to the All-Cal Tournament title, and several pros, Celtic Don Nelson most prominent among them, run summer basketball camps which include girls. Thacker finds women more coachable than men. "I have some innovative ideas about basketball that I think they grasp faster than men," he said before his team's first game, against Miami of Ohio. "Women have been playing stereotype basketball. I'm trying to get my girls out of some old habits, like slow, sagging, lazy zones. I'm trying to indoctrinate them into the fast break, pressing zones, zone traps, switching and all the complicated things men do. When I speak of their easy grasp, I mean they don't have preconceived ideas about basketball. They haven't had the early orientation boys have and they haven't developed to the point where they can't change their games."

Thacker's theories will have greater impact, however, when the Bearkittens are permitted to finish what they start. Their opener, played as a preliminary to the men's game with SMU, was aborted with 4:50 to go and Cincy leading 53-50 to allow the men to begin their warm-ups. The game was recorded as a 0-0 tie.

Miami Coach Elaine Hieber com-

plained that a man had been sent to do a woman's job. "I don't mean to attack Tom Thacker," she said, attacking Tom Thacker, "but if Cincinnati had a woman coach, she would have been fighting against stopping the game as hard as I was."

#### SINE OF THE TIMES

Students with pocket calculators will please take them out; the rest of you are excused. Our problem for today is to determine the beneficiary in the following eight-digit situation: if you take the 14 million U.S. motorists who are using the highways at any given moment, plus the 215,000 drivers lining up at filling stations, plus 400 unhappy strip mine operators, and set them all in the middle of Saudi Arabia with 69 sheiks dancing around them in oil-rich glee—and you keep the whole mob there for five days (that's right, students, multiply by five)—who is the clear winner? Turn your calculators around and read the answer upside down. Class dismissed.

#### RETORT JUSTE

Almost before the inquisitive stranger can get the words out—"Are you a . . .?"—George Johnson, the 6'11" center of the Golden State Warriors, is replying politely, "No, I'm a gynecologist." At other times he is a pediatrician or a podiatrist or an anesthesiologist. Johnson claims he actually enjoys being approached now. "People show great respect for my ability to pass med school despite my height."

It is a good ploy, but no tall man ever came up with a better answer than Johnny Kerr, who used to play for Syracuse and is now business manager of the Chicago Bulls. "No, ma'am," he once told a nice little lady. "I am a jockey for a dinosaur."

#### THEY SAID IT

- Johnny Miller, winning his second 1975 tournament after collecting a record \$353,021 last year: "The dollars aren't important—once you have them."
- Muhammad Ali, asked if Chuck Wepner, his upcoming foe, was a white hope: "That's the only hope he's got."
- Anne Hayes, wife of Ohio State's Woody, on her speaking schedule: "I always say I am going to talk about sex and marriage, but being a football coach's wife, I don't know about either."

END

# BILL WALTON, WON'T YOU PLEASE PLAY BALL?

**A**s the Portland Trail Blazers warmed up for a home game just before New Year's, the band blasted into *Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home?* Then the musicians put down their instruments and started singing some lines they had just written. As the Blazers caught the words they began to smile and stopped shooting. A hush came as the full house strained to hear the lyrics:

*Won't you please play, Bill Walton,  
Won't you please play ball?  
We missed a whole month long,  
We paid two million for you,  
Why don't you play?  
We'll even throw in a song*

Less than 30 feet away from the band was a bearded young man resembling Ichabod Crane outfitted as a hippie lumberjack. Bill Walton sat motionless on the Portland bench in his flannel shirt and jeans, a bandanna wrapped around his long red hair. Obviously unable to shut out the lyrics, he showed no reaction.

The band blared defiantly into a final chorus but still Walton sat immobile, his expression the vacant gaze of a man staring at a prison wall.

The crowd roared and the band marched off, pleased with the success of its little jest. The irony—one of the many in the Walton enigma—was that the lighthearted prod at Walton almost certainly produced an exactly opposite effect from what was intended. Walton's psyche is butterfly-fragile, and pressure

*For eight weeks, the million-dollar Portland rookie sat on the bench, collecting his pay and disbursing it all will*

by RICK TELANDER

of any sort deeply unsettles him. Indeed, such onslaughts, coupled with such other psyche-affecting factors as seasonal rains, athletic frustration, nerves and fear have clouded his future in pro basketball. At the time of the band concert Walton had been missing from Trail Blazer games for five weeks. Before the million-dollar rookie, of whom so much had been expected, would return to the lineup—as he finally did last week—half the season would be gone and the situation in Portland had become nearly intolerable.

The stated reason for Walton's not playing was a bone spur in his left ankle. But before that it had been flu and then a jammed finger. Among Portland fans—in the beginning ready to grant Walton almost any eccentricity—disbelief in those injuries had been growing. "Hell, he's been pampered all his life," snorted a sportswriter covering the team. "If a guy wants to sniff wildflowers instead of playing, O.K., but he shouldn't take \$2.5 million to do it." At Love's restaurant across from the Coliseum a middle-aged woman had another view: "He just sits there with that rope around his head and his mouth open and looks . . . well . . . so stupid."

Season ticket sales for the Blazers in-

creased by nearly 3,300 this year—putting roughly \$750,000 extra in the till—a blessing attributed entirely to Walton. ("What do you think? They're coming to see me!" says Herman Sarkowsky, a part owner.) But with Walton not playing, the situation had elements of a rip-off.

Under the circumstances, the original open-armed acceptance of Walton could not last forever. "Sure, there's a counterculture here," says Assistant Coach Tom Meschery, "but this is pretty much a red-neck, workers' town. There's always a chance fans will turn on a guy." Walton clearly felt the stress. In the weeks before his return a stammer marred his already cautious speech, particularly when facing sportswriters or people he did not know well. "He had the impediment in college but it's gotten worse since then," says a friend who visited him in Portland.

There never was any doubt that Walton had a bone spur. It first bothered him in a game against Seattle two months ago and Walton immediately declared himself unable to play. "Most players aren't bothered by spurs," says Blazer Trainer continued

*In his first game since November, a guest and out-of-shape Walton played against Cleveland.*





Rainy winters in Portland leave Walton cold.

#### WALTON *continued*

Ron Culp, "Though it's a traumatic type injury, the spur itself may be developing for 20 years. Bill just came down the floor and said, 'It hurts.' We hadn't noticed anything but if it hurts, it hurts. And it's in the standard contract that a player doesn't have to play injured."

In the pro basketball locker room, a bone spur is considered a discomfort rather than a disability, a minor annoyance that comes with the game, like a jammed finger or jumper's knee. Dr. Robert Kerlan, the celebrated orthopedic specialist whom Walton saw when he was at UCLA, estimates that 100% of all pro basketball players have spurs, but not all of them are painful. "It results from continued running and cutting and usually occurs first on the ankle one pivots on the most. There's little we can do for them," Culp says, "You just ice it and as it feels better you increase activity." Adds Kerlan: "Certainly Bill showed in college that he could play with pain. But he may prefer not to play with this particular injury. The absolute last thing a doctor thinks about is a player malingering, faking it."

In Walton's case, however, there seemed to be a pattern to his play. As early as October he had begun to slow down noticeably in the later stages of games, which led to speculation that his meatless diet might be responsible. But Blazer Coach Lenny Wilkens preferred to explain it as simply a first-year phenomenon: "A lot of rookies run out of stamina." Then Walton missed two

games because of flu and on his first night back jammed the little finger on his left hand, which is not his shooting hand. The finger kept him out a week although pros also regularly play with that particular injury. In the second game after his return he complained about the bone spur and that was the competitive end of him until last week. "Three times a day I'd ask him how he felt," says Culp, "and three times a day he'd say it hurts."

But in practices, which he was required by contract to attend to stay on the payroll, Walton seemed as sprightly and unhobbled as ever. Early arrivals at a Bulls-Blazers game in Chicago were surprised to see Walton, in uniform, engaged in an all-out one-on-one contest with Bulls rookie Mickey Johnson 45 minutes before game time. But by the opening tip Walton was back on the bench, wearing street clothes.

By the All-Star break teammates had added "Captain Flake" to a list of nicknames for Walton which already included "Rodan," "Skunky" and, naturally, "Dollar Bill." Only partially in jest the Blazers started calling his 20-game injury the "brain spur." "They say it hurts him two inches from the spur," said Guard Geoff Petrie somewhat incredulously. Yet the main feeling of Walton's teammates was not humor but an enormous sense of disappointment. "Dollar was going to be the man," said Forward John Johnson. "This is all just a big let-down." Indeed, they had really believed that Walton might help turn the franchise around. And now instead of their lofty preseason goals the Blazers were being forced to accept more ordinary hopes. "Now, well, I personally am shooting for .500," said All-Star Forward Sidney Wicks.

If the spur was to be discounted, what then was Walton's problem? On the surface he seemed to be fantastically lucky—financially set for life for playing a game he loved, the owner of a stunning new home, free as he never was in college to dress and talk as he saw fit, established in the kind of nature-blessed state that most appealed to him.

But the list of Walton's troubles—or what he considered troubles—could start with something as basic as his height. Though he is obviously taller than, say, backup Center LaRue Martin, who stands 6'11", Walton doesn't want to be listed at 7 feet. So the program has him at 6'11" too. His father remembers that

after Bill "grew off the hall closet door" in the Walton home, he never talked about his height again. "He feels 7 feet is where being a freak starts," says Wicks, who was three years ahead of Walton at UCLA and is almost his only friend on the Blazers. A walk beside Walton through the Portland airport revealed something of what his height means. He was forced, as usual, to bend nearly double to squeeze through the security scanner, a contortion that struck bystanders as comical. Handing him his luggage, a female attendant giggled, "How's the weather up there?" Another sharp-witted type remarked, "I don't like your altitude, fella." Sometimes Walton responds to such comments with obscenities but this time he shook his head sadly, murmured a nearly inaudible "thank you" and trudged, pigeon-toed and stoop-shouldered, toward his plane.

Walton has also been troubled by the thought that he was being pumped up because his height qualified him to be a "Great White Hope," an instant counterbalance in a predominantly black sport. "If I were black I'd be just another center," he once said with blinding inaccuracy. Other super-tall rookie centers have managed to adjust to pro basketball's pressures, but, as Mischery says, "It's just that Bill probably has received more pressure than any of the big men, more than anybody deserves. It's too bad, but that's the capitalist system."

"This summer I tried to tell Bill everything to expect in the NBA," says Wicks, who had his own troubles as a rookie. "I told him it's not fun and games anymore, that you work basketball, that you can't win all the time because it's not good old UCLA, that you've got to, I guess, just grow up. But it's one of those things you have to experience for yourself."

From an early age, Walton disliked the pressures that inevitably come from standing out from everybody else. What Walton did enjoy, and even demand, was the fluid, selfless motion of a team without a star but with five equals. At UCLA his needs were satisfied by Coach John Wooden's pressing, passing style of play in which all five starters were capable of hitting double figures. "Bill loves the game, but only as a team game," says Wooden. "He is very impatient and gets more upset than most people when he feels the game isn't being played right."

In certain ways Walton was spoiled at UCLA—by never losing a game until his senior year, by being sheltered from the press, by having his wishes for privacy and teamwork catered to, even by receiving continual discipline from the coach. But it is another of the ironies that the great California basketball factory did not prepare its star for the realities of his natural profession.

"I tried to tell him it would be the emotional and not the physical part of the game that would be difficult, that in the pros it's basically not a team game," says Wooden. "I also felt he would need discipline, that underneath he wants a firm hand, which is something Lenny [Wilkins] hasn't used. When he was here we had our disagreements but I always governed his behavior and appearance on court. Now he can grow his beard, anything. There's no one to tell him 'no' on the Trail Blazers."

Still, at the end of his senior year, Walton was eager to turn pro. He spurned an ABA offer for more dollars than Portland finally offered him, saying he was looking for challenge and that it was only in the NBA that he could truly test himself.

His first test came soon enough in the form of Milwaukee's Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the man whose alltime UCLA rebounding record Walton had broken just a few months earlier. In a preseason game with Milwaukee, Abdul-Jabbar so completely dominated the rookie that the effects of the evening were perhaps more severe than most people suspected. One close friend of Bill's believes it was a major turning point. "Getting whipped by Kareem really depressed Bill. This was something he wasn't used to, playing fantastic centers night after night and then all of a sudden getting thoroughly trounced. After that, players started pushing him around like a sheet of paper and he hardly fought back. His desire started to fade fast."

Other problems, large and small, began to gnaw at Walton. In college he had always done the off-court kidding but here, as the youngest player on the team, he was the butt of most of the jokes. The Blazers laughed at his unorthodox dress and teased him for hoarding his millions and for smelling like a mountain man a condition caused by his "not really leaving into the showers," as one player put it.

And there was the matter of team play,

something that had never come naturally to the Blazers. Once after Petrie took what Walton considered a ridiculously long shot, Walton grabbed the rebound and without attempting a follow-up called a time-out. On the bench he announced that he couldn't play with such selfish people anymore.

Soon he began losing stamina and weight. From time to time he would fast. He began looking distracted, almost sickly. Within a month he was not playing.

Under the terms of his contract Walton was still expected to travel to games when able, and during a recent road trip to Los Angeles he seemed livelier than he had been in some time. Sitting on the grass in front of the Airport Hyatt House he kept his smiling face aimed at the sun while he pounded his knees to the beat of a tape deck. From a distance he resembled a bearded monk having a mild seizure. Little kids came by and sat down with him and together they read *Mad* magazine and chuckled at the gags. Suddenly Walton caught sight of the airport bus maneuvering in the hotel driveway. Thinking that it was leaving him behind, Walton rose and screamed a monstrous obscenity that startled the boys but not his teammates. "Old Dollar needs himself a personal valet just to follow him around," says John Johnson. "He gets a little lost."

On the plane Walton stared out the window. "See that mountain way over there? That is the most beautiful place in the world, my secret place—where I go when I'm down here to watch the sun rise. I can't tell you the name because somebody'd print it and then. . . ." He grinned. "You know something, everything you need is in California. Everything."

He was served his specially prepared lunch but he ate only an apple and an avocado, while drinking several glasses of wine. The woman behind Walton began to complain that his seat was back too far, not realizing perhaps that his knees were already jammed up near his chin. Walton stood up, told her briliantly what she could do with herself and found another seat. He flipped on a tape of a Dylan concert close to his head and, singing "everybody must get stoned," he shut out the rest of the plane and stared down at the unraveling coastline.

Later in the flight he pointed to a magazine article by Isaac Asimov on solar energy. "Read this," he said to his seat-

mate with a solemn nod. The article, about America's non-use of what is potentially its largest energy source, seemed to substantiate one of Walton's major beliefs—that the governing powers are influenced by the profit motive, not by people's welfare. Walton then offered that the two philosophers most in line with his own thinking were Bob Dylan and Joe McDonald, late of Country Joe & the Fish. Not because they're "special," he said, but because they have been able to "see things clearly." If he met them, he added, he would simply act normal. "People ought to understand that you always act like yourself. You see, positions are what ruin us, prevent us from dealing with each other as people rather than images. That's what people try to do to me, to everyone, to define us and limit us. I like people, not positions, and that's why I don't like the press."

Not surprisingly, Walton has a hard time talking with his Blazers teammates, in this fashion—or in any other fashion, for that matter. It is another of the troubles that have developed in Portland for him.

Back at UCLA Walton always had Greg Lee to talk to. Lee, an excellent student, self-described beach bum and a fellow ballplayer, was in fact Walton's first guru, leading him through a variety of causes and beliefs. "They were like

—of

The gentle giant has ungentlemanly traits





**WALTON** *continued*

Lennie and George from *List of Mice and Men*," one classmate recalls. Even Wooden noted Bill's tendencies to adopt the beliefs of others. "Bill is a good person," says the coach, "but he's a follower, not a leader."

Lee remembers that Walton enjoyed delving into ideas almost as much as playing ball. "I've never seen anybody who could thrust himself into causes as wholeheartedly or as fast as Bill. Boy, could he get excited. He used to come into my room at seven in the morning with his eyes wide open, saying 'Let's go!' You could almost make a lot of the things we were into. First, there was politics, which I loved, then there was the diet, then bicycles, which Bill got into very heavily but I didn't, then transcendental meditation, though by that time I was into self-hypnosis. And as a freshman Bill was practically celibate, so I got him going with the chicks. And of course Dylan was from me. But Joe McDonald is from the people up north. Bill never had any Fish albums at school."

There were other gurus for Walton besides Lee—among them a diminutive political expert from Chicago and a local meditation/vegetarian expert. But by graduation he felt he was ready to go it alone.

He had said publicly that he would only play where it was warm, and when he arrived in Oregon in early May that was how he found it. He reveled in the sun and lush green countryside. "I can't stand the smog in L.A. I may never go to Southern California again," he told people. "I'm in love with the pure wilderness of Oregon."

Sam Gilbert, a Los Angeles construction millionaire who had been a confidant and adviser of Walton and other UCLA players, went with Walton and together they found a plot along the bank of the Willamette River for the special

Walton's unfinished \$100,000 A-frame outside Portland is designed for a 7-footer

home Walton had dreamed of—one with dimensions that would fit him and with plenty of room for semi-permanent guests. The lot was on Nixon Avenue. "We'll impeach the street!" cried Walton jubilantly.

"There was a bicycle path that went for miles along the river and there were mountains to climb and a blue sky above," says Gilbert. "Bill was happy, wild. He wanted land, land. All his dreams had come true."

Walton even located a very laid-back natural food restaurant called The Center for Truth. For Walton it was especially pleasant because no one gawked. Months later, staring out at the drizzle of the gloomy Oregon winter, he would sit there picking at a bowl of rice, wondering how things could have gone so bad.

The Eden started to dissolve with the coming of the rainy season. He had been warned about the rain. In a last-ditch effort to sway him, the ABA representatives had prepared a chart of Portland's massive annual rainfall and told him jokes about people in Oregon rusting rather than tanning. But in the grandeur of spring and summer he had forgotten.

"Bill has a real thing about the sun," says Wicks. "He feels he actually gets energy from its rays. But up here when the sun goes away you don't see it for five months. When Bill finally realized that, he was crying."

As his depression deepened, and his injuries lingered, the Blazers continued to play without Walton, and his relations with his teammates worsened.

At one practice on the morning after a game—in which he, of course, had not played—Walton came to the gym full of pep and proceeded to block his tired teammates' shots in layup drills and make a general nuisance of himself. "Why don't you run by yourself, Dollar?" snapped John Johnson. Other Blazers tried to ignore his presence. But when Wilkins left the floor to go to an appointment, the players suddenly surrounded Walton, grinning slyly. "Let's take our frustrations out on Captain Flake," someone said, cocking a ball behind his ear. "Yeah, give me your psych checks, too," shouted Walton. "You already got 'em!" answered Johnson, and the first ball whistled past Walton's head. Another

er careened off his leg. Soon the air was filled with sizzlers as every player blasted away at the dodging, swearing center. They chased balls into the stands, laughing like maniacs, and returned to throw them at Walton, again and again.

Walton's evasive, often surly, behavior off the floor was not helping him much, either. Once, at an autograph-signing session at Meier & Frank Department Store, a big Trail Blazer sponsor, Walton alienated everybody by waving his bandaged little finger and telling the 600 children who had showed up that he could sign no autographs, not even make an X. As usual, his immaturity in a crowd was read as arrogance.

By Thanksgiving, Walton had become so unsettled that he called Gilbert in Los Angeles and told him he couldn't take any more and that he was quitting the game. Sensing disaster, Gilbert flew to Portland and told him he would lose all but a small portion of his 15-year contract and that what he would get wouldn't even cover his income tax. Walton replied that he didn't care, that he would declare bankruptcy and live on the land near Santa Barbara. Gilbert explained that taxes would ruin Walton, that all his possessions would be confiscated. "Bill does like the social amenities," said Gilbert later. And perhaps at the thought of losing his nearly completed home with the custom skylights, the four-man whirlpool, the 26-foot-high cedar ceiling and the \$1,800 restaurant stove complete with six burners and a three-foot griddle, Walton reluctantly changed his mind. "He just decided he didn't want to be in debt to the government for the rest of his life," says Greg Lee, one of the few people who knew of the incident, which Walton has since termed "a rumor."

But the fact that Bill was desperately unhappy in Portland didn't change. Suddenly he decided Southern California was where he wanted to be after all, and in early December he went to Blazer officials and told them he would play ball again if they would trade him to Los Angeles. Naturally they informed him this was impossible. No team likes to trade in the same division, and in Portland's case the repercussions from the fans and press would have been disastrous. But one thing struck some people about Walton's offer: if he was saying he could play elsewhere, then he wasn't, in fact, really hurt.



Rumors of Walton's possible retirement shocked Portland. "Everybody had been so nice to Bill," says Sam Gilbert. "A builder had done his home at no profit, his special shirts were made at cost, and even his mortgage was given to him at a mere 6 1/4%."

Walton's response was that he was cold in Portland. "He kept complaining that his feet were cold, that his whole body was seriously, physically cold," says Gilbert.

Walton flew to Los Angeles to consult Dr. Kerlan and complained to him about the symptoms, saying that it took three days for his feet to warm up. "That was the way he honestly felt," says Dr. Kerlan, though he was unable to find any outward signs of the chill.

To many people Walton's actions indicate selfishness and ingratitude for what he has. A Los Angeles businessman who was once very close to Walton calls him "an egocentric child, a 22-year-old going on 11." Others find it difficult to reconcile Walton's wealth and fame with his supposed concern for the poor and hungry of the world. They try to match his refusal to allow drugs to be used in treating his injuries (because they would contaminate his body) with his occasional use of alcohol.

As yet, if his views are contradictory, it is more that Walton is himself filled with contradictions rather than a conscious effort to delude. "He's done his best to get written off by society," says Greg Lee. "But the irony is, the only way you can do that is by being bland and normal."

Amid all the ruckus remains the fact that Walton sincerely enjoys the game of basketball. "I've played everything—baseball, football, tennis, track—and it just seems to me that basketball is the most complete game because it requires the most skills," he said recently. "It's a game I am built for but even if I were short I think I could make it as a guard."

And his old competitive drive still lurks not far beneath the surface. Shortly before his return, in a one-on-one game against Tom Meschery, a 6'6", 235-pound former NBA star himself, Walton became angered and drove straight over the coach, knocking him down and flattening his nose. As Meschery went for a towel to stop the bleeding, Walton continued to shoot and offered no apology.

Two weeks ago, as the situation was becoming less and less tolerable, Walton

went to Los Angeles to see an acupuncturist and afterward said he was ready to play again. Last Thursday he came off the bench and played 14 minutes against Cleveland. Next night in Houston, Wilkens had him in for 22 minutes in which he scored 13 points and had a game-high 11 rebounds. On Sunday against Abdul-Jabbar and Milwaukee again, he got another lesson on how to play center in the NBA. Treatments may have helped his ankle, but certain obstacles stand in the way of his regaining the promise of his preseason days. For one thing it is questionable whether the team that has come to regard him as a cornflake can rally round him again.

And there is also the problem of his weight. He came back gaunt as a refugee and having lost virtually all his stamina. "His legs are so skinny they're turning blue," says Wilkens. Other teammates kid him pointedly about what he eats, and his diet has become a matter of concern to Wilkens. "By not eating meat or fish Bill loses the main source of bulk which is essential for a big man in this game because bulk builds strength," he says. "I know Bill gets enough vitamins but I'll have to watch his progress to see if the lack of bulk hurts him. If it does it is definitely in my power to demand a change of diet. It's the same as a player coming in overweight, only in reverse."

The Blazers have greeted Walton's return with a wait-and-see attitude. Said Petrie: "Certainly Bill can fit into this team. But I think he has to earn the respect of the team first. And I don't think it will be easy. He has to mold himself with this club. He has to make himself stronger. I think he has to make some compromises."

Some who have witnessed the season thus far doubt that he can make it. A man who has dealt with him throughout his career said, before Walton had started to play again, "All things considered, I think he's gone too far to function in the NBA again."

Meanwhile Walton has found a new lawyer—Black Panther Party attorney Charles Garry—and a new spiritual leader. Jack Scott, the anti-sports Establishment author, has moved in with Walton and his "family" and appears to be calling some of Walton's shots.

What Walton really intends to do with himself perhaps no one knows. But as they say in the Pacific Northwest, the ax is in his hands.

END



Striking off, Walton blazes his own trail.

# HOCKEY IS COURTING DISASTER

When a Hennepin County (Minn.) grand jury indicted Dave Forbes of the Boston Bruins on Jan. 17 for aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon—his hockey stick—on Henry Boucha of the Minnesota North Stars during a game earlier in the month, it opened a Pandora's box of potential legal complications that could alter the nature of hockey and all contact sports. As the 26-year-old Bruin leftwinger was arraigned on the felony charge in Hennepin District Court last week, he became the first pro athlete in the United States to be hauled before a judge by civil authorities for the commission of an act within the confines of a playing area. If the case proceeds to trial and Forbes is convicted, he would receive a mandatory minimum sentence of three years in prison.

At present Forbes is serving a 10-game suspension without pay imposed by National Hockey League President Clarence Campbell, who termed the case "one of the most vicious incidents that I have ever been called upon to deal with." Boucha, meanwhile, is still suffering double vision caused when Forbes punched him with the butt end of his hockey stick. "Are we supposed to sit here and say 'Boys will be boys?'" said Hennepin County Attorney Gary Flakne, who announced the indictment. "I agree that hockey is a contact sport, but there seems to be a line which the grand jury found, and I agree with, beyond which something other than good-natured hard contact becomes assault."

The indictment carries ominous overtones. "If this civil intervention is pursued to trial," said Campbell, a lawyer himself, "we will have to give great thought to the future of our game. As far as I am concerned, civil authority is not equipped to deal with this type of situation." Harry Sinden, the managing director of the Bruins, warned that "if Forbes is convicted of anything, we'd have to think twice about letting Bobby Orr, Phil Esposito and all our other players ever skate in Minnesota again." Sinden paused. "If they convict Forbes," he

*A single player has been indicted but it will be the pervading Pier Six atmosphere of the sport that will be on trial later this year*

by MARK MULVOY



Forbes: facing prison, not a penalty box

added, "think of what could happen to football players who hit the quarterback after the whistle or to baseball players who slide into second base with their spikes high and cut another player."

Hockey had a similar case five years ago in which Ottawa police swore out charges against Ted Green of the Bruins and the late Wayne Maki of the St. Louis Blues for "assault causing bodily harm" after a vicious stick-swinging fight during an exhibition game. Green, now a New England Whaler, suffered a fractured skull and missed the entire season. He still wears a plate in his skull. Maki died last year of an unrelated brain tumor. In separate trials one judge declared Maki "not guilty" on grounds of self-defense; another judge found Green "not guilty" as well, saying that "hockey cannot be played without what normally are called assaults."

Maybe not, but as Campbell grimly admitted after the Forbes indictment, "Something must be done to control the violence in our game. I hear 10 discipline cases each week. And over the course of a season, I suspect I hear at least 10 cases where the civil authorities might think a crime was committed." He shook his head. "Without doubt this has been our worst year ever for sheer violence on the ice." Underscoring that statement is the fact that so far this season Campbell has suspended seven NHL players:

- Dennis Owchar of Pittsburgh and Bryan Watson of Detroit were given two- and three-game suspensions respectively, following a kicking match.
- Ernie Hicke of the New York Islanders was suspended for two games after kicking Bobby Schumatz of the Bruins.
- Don Saleski and Bob Kelly of Philadelphia each received six-game suspensions for their parts in a massive gang-fight in Oakland.
- Keith Magnuson of Chicago was suspended for three games as a result of breaking Chris Oddleifson's jaw when he hit the Vancouver forward with a fist that was partly encased in a cast.
- And now Forbes.

It was, as Campbell said, an "ugly" night in Minnesota. The North Stars, hockey's most disappointing team, were on the verge of a major personnel shake-up as they skated against the Bruins at the Met in Bloomington on Jan. 4. One of the few secure players on their roster was the 23-year-old Boucha, whom they had acquired from Detroit in a pre-season deal and had subsequently refused to trade to Montreal in exchange for Wayne Thomas, a desperately needed goaltender. Boucha comes from Warroad, Minn., on the Canadian border, and is a minor folk hero around the Twin Cities, where people vividly remember his exploits for Warroad High and the 1972 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team. Early in the first period Boucha chased a loose puck against the boards, trailed closely by Forbes. Like most NHL players, Forbes tends to arrive at collisions with

his elbows in an extended and upright position. Boucha accepted the elbows, turned around and then flattened Forbes. Referee Ron Wicks banished both players for a total of seven minutes.

According to Campbell's published explanation of what happened, Boucha and Forbes exchanged threats as they sat in their respective penalty boxes. Forbes reportedly told Boucha that he would "shove his stick down his throat." How Boucha retorted has not been divulged. When Boucha and Forbes returned to the ice at the expiration of their penalties, Boucha started to skate toward the Minnesota bench on the opposite side of the rink. Forbes was skating behind Boucha and to his right. Suddenly Forbes supposedly said, "O.K., let's go now." And then, by all accounts, he took a swing at Boucha. Forbes' hockey stick was in his right hand, and while he apparently missed Boucha with his gloved hand, he did hit him with the butt end of the stick. The Minnesota forward dropped to the ice, his hands covering his face. Forbes then discarded his stick and gloves and jumped on top of Boucha and continued to punch away until Murray Oliver of the North Stars pulled him away.

Boucha was removed from the ice on a stretcher and rushed to Methodist Hospital. Some 25 stitches were needed to close the cut beside his right eye. Wearing a patch over the eye, Boucha was released from the hospital the following morning. However, when the patch was removed five days later, Boucha complained of double vision. New X rays revealed a small fracture at the floor of the right eye socket and an eye specialist performed remedial surgery the next day.

Aware that the grand jury was investigating the Boucha-Forbes matter, Campbell shifted the NHL's own scheduled hearing from Montreal to Minneapolis and spent more than eight hours locked in Suite 1614 of the Radisson South Hotel with the involved parties.

"The salient facts of the incident are amply verified by several witnesses," he said. Then he announced the 10-game suspension of Forbes. In Minnesota the league president's punishment was greeted with disbelief. "Only 10 games?" said Dennis Hextall, one of Boucha's teammates. In Boston, Campbell's penalty got an op-

posite reaction. "They're treating the kid like John Dillinger," Sinden said. Bobby Orr, Phil Esposito, Johnny Bucyk and Carol Vadnais planned to protest the severity of Forbes' penalty by boycotting the NHL All-Star game. However, Forbes convinced them to play.

Then came the grand jury's indictment, which some hockey people have interpreted as a warning that "if you cannot police your business properly, we will." Campbell, of course, defends his punitive measures, saying, "Our record supports what we are doing." Does it? Alan Eagleson, the executive director of the NHL's Players' Association, believes that Campbell's internal decisions in such matters ought to be sufficient, but he wonders if the penalties imposed by Campbell have not been too lenient. "On the whole, the individual incidents seem somewhat small and insignificant," he says, "but it is imperative that the league clamp down severely on all this stick

swinging. Campbell must act more decisively than he has in the past. The tendency is to say, 'Nothing drastic has happened.' Well, they ought to operate as though everything that has happened has been drastic. So Wayne Maks and Ted Green didn't kill one another? So Henry Boucha didn't lose his eye? Let's handle these things in a stronger way now. Or else."

Campbell, for his part, sees no easy remedies for the air of violence that has dominated the sport in recent years. "People keep telling us that we are ogres, teaching kids to poke each other's eyes out," he says, "but I feel that is hardly the case. The fact is, this is only the second time we have had civil problems. In the end the trial judge has ultimate jurisdiction, and I'm sure he will look at the total picture, the same way the judges did in Ottawa."

So, boys will be boys. Or will they?

END

*Boucha: Looking at the future with double vision as he recuperates back home in Warroad.*



# IN PURSUIT OF HIGHER EARNINGS



*Lessons of Baja: Smith should gamble more at the net and put a tougher cut on volleys.*

*Attempting to recapture his winning ways, Stan Smith, the erstwhile hot female of tennis, joined his college coach for a cram session in Mexico*

by JOE JARES

**I**t was nearing dusk at Estero Beach, less than 100 miles down the wild, beautiful Baja California coast from Tijuana. Across the churning bay stood the twin of Honolulu's Diamond Head, a rocky promontory called Punta Banda, which in minutes would be just a massive silhouette against the fast-sinking sun. The fishing camp behind was out of sight and out of mind, and a chilled visitor standing on the sand facing the bay thought that Estero must have been the same—desolate and lovely—as when the Spaniards arrived 440 years ago.

Then, roaring along the wide, empty beach came a mechanical intruder, a jeep, and running behind it were four men straining to keep up. The tallest of them, a blond with the beginnings of a fine Viking beard, was Stan Smith. In this unlikely spot, so far in mood and miles from Wimbledon's strawberries and the September clamminess of Forest Hills, he was finishing the first day of a campaign he hopes will make him once again the finest tennis player in America and maybe the world.

The commandant of the jeep, alternately ordering the driver to speed up and slow down, was George Toley, 58, the tennis coach at USC and a man so at home in Mexico that when he mixes margaritas in his hotel room he can actually make the salt stick to the rims of the plastic glasses. Three different Mexican Davis Cup captains have played on his teams. He helped the late Rafael Osuna become U.S. champion, and Mexico's current star, 21-year-old Raul Ramirez, has been his pupil since he could barely see over the net.

Toley is a pro's pro, the fellow ex-Trojan players go back to for refresher courses and injections of common sense. He, not the scenery or the enchiladas, was the reason Smith was in Baja with his former Davis Cup doubles partner, Erik van Dillen, Ramirez, who lives six miles north in Ensenada, and a promis-

ing 15-year-old Mexican, Mark Novelo.

Toley, Smith, van Dillen and their wives were staying at the Estero Beach resort hotel run by Novelo's father and founded in 1939 by his grandfather, an Ensenada businessman who went to Eshero one day to buy some shark liver and ended up purchasing the current site of the hotel for \$400. It has one tennis court, cement, snuggled up against a little hill on which sits the Novelo home.

Smith and his wife Margie arrived in Baja the day after Christmas, having just concluded a 22-stop honeymoon trip that included stays in California, Australia, Bali, Fiji and Hawaii, where Stan hefted a racket for the first time in more than a month. It was his longest respite from tennis since he got out of college, and he needed it badly.

Just two years ago Stanley Roger Smith was the dominant player in the world. He won Forest Hills in 1971, followed that with the Wimbledon championship in 1972 and topped that soon afterward by leading the U.S. Davis Cup team to victory in Bucharest despite hostile crowds, myopic lineamen and a slow playing surface that was unsuitable for his big-serve style. Released from what must have been the most KP-free and lucrative Army duty any private ever had, Smith joined Lamar Hunt's World

*After analyzing what he saw on the medium of videotape, Toley gives Stan the message.*

Championship Tennis Tour and in the spring of 1973 won both the doubles and singles championships. It seemed he was capable of winning the grinding new grand slam of tennis: WCT, Wimbledon, Forest Hills and the Commercial Union Grand Prix—the two big tours and the two big tournaments.

Seven months later he was in a New York hospital for a complete physical checkup. He was underweight and dejected after a disappointing summer and fall in which he lost a close, critical Davis Cup match to John Newcombe and was twice defeated by Jimmy Connors.

His eight hours in the hospital turned up nothing but the obvious: Smith had a near-terminal case of tennis indigestion, his eyes were turning tennis-ball yellow and his heart was pumping Gatorade. The cure prescribed for early 1974 was rest, but that did not work out so well either. He loafed and played some exhibitions while the Davis Cup team went off to Bogotá without him—and lost. Although he won \$139,120 in 1974, it was a mediocre year by his standards.

"It finally came to a climax whereby he just couldn't play," says Jack Kramer, head of the Players' Association. *continued*



*A jog on the lovely Baja beach is merely the start of the long run to the finish of the race—where Newcombe, Connors & Co. are waiting.*



"He didn't want to play, in my opinion, and he lost confidence. He won hardly anything and he lost to a lot of really inferior players, something he hadn't done before.

"I look at it this way: 25 years ago, before open tennis came in and even in the days when we were running pro tours, the champions were people who played 13 to maybe 17 events a year. So all of us guys who achieved our records in those years, we really were .500 hitters. I mean, you won nine out of 10 tournaments if you were the best player because you were always rested and keen.

"Since open tennis has come in, Rod Laver has the best record overall, with Stan and John Newcombe close, but they win roughly one out of four tournaments, so they're .250 batters. Now, if a Smith wants to be an .800 hitter, it's possible, but he's got to go back to our philosophy. Play 15 tournaments and play 'em all damned good, or play 25 or 30 and play 10 or 12 of 'em bad. That's all."

Smith will play a lot, and no doubt he'll be bad at times, but at least he is starting out in the right frame of mind. He was relaxed and happy when he reported to Tolley the day after Christmas.

Not in evidence was the tired pessimism of 1974 that gave rise to statements

such as these: "It's been an exasperating year . . . I haven't put anything together like I did last year . . . I don't feel I've been playing up to my potential and I feel bad about it . . . You get a few breaks, you lose a few close matches and some confidence disappears."

At the breakfast table one morning, Smith recalled a conversation he had had with a critic:

"'Gee, what's the matter with you this year, you haven't won Wimbledon?'

"'Yes, but Wimbledon hasn't been played yet.'

"'And you haven't won Forest Hills event?'

"'Well, Forest Hills hasn't been played either.'"

Yet, even for a fellow who was expected to win big tournaments before the draws were made and didn't, Smith's off year was good enough to have satisfied a lot of players. He was in the final eight of both the WCT doubles and singles for the second straight time, although on this occasion he won neither. He was a semi-finalist at Wimbledon, blowing a match to Ken Rosewall on Centre Court after having what seemed like an insurmountable lead. If he could have held on there, the whole season might have been given a restraining, since most critics believe he would have been a more formidable opponent for Connors in the final. He was a quarter-finalist at Forest Hills, knocked out by hard-serving Roscoe Tanner.

Smith plans to say no to a few more tournament directors from now on and no this year to World Team Tennis, which would like to have him playing for its New York franchise. He is not in the Superstars contests against athletes from other sports, even though he did quite well last year.

The lounging was pleasant on the shady patio at one corner of the Novello tennis court. While Tolley drilled the players (Smith did noticeably more huffing and puffing than the others because of his layoff), the spectators sat under an umbrella and chatted. There was speculation as to how van Dillen's switch from a metal racket to wood might affect his game. If a football game was on television, Margie Smith would periodically pop out of the house to give the latest score. But Topic A was "Can Stan fight back and be once again the top-ranked player in the world?"

"Stan was always a confident tennis

player," said Tolley during a break. "He was No. 1 in the world, so he had to have something going for him. He's got a lot going for him because of his personality and so forth. He's not easily discouraged. I don't know how deep these scars are, but I'm optimistic that he can do it."

"I think that a break like Stan has had gives a person a different perspective. It's easier, then, to adopt new ideas and new methods. He can really look back and see what he wants to change."

"He has the ability, and he's done it before," said van Dillen. "But every year it gets tougher."

Smith himself, not the sort to reveal whatever grandiose dreams he might have, said only that his first goal was to win the WCT. But his bride, once the No. 1 player on Princeton's women's tennis team and the top woman player in the East, was not so reluctant.

"There's no doubt in my mind that he can do it," she said. "And I don't think there's any doubt in his."

Smith is sometimes described as having been a big awkward donkey as a teenager, the sort of oaf who could not get out of the way of his own sneakers, but Tolley, who first watched him swing a racket at age 16, says that "he never looked that clumsy to me," and that he obviously had been coordinated or he would not have been able to play on a very good Pasadena High basketball team.

"He looked like a good prospect for tennis," says Tolley, "but there was one peculiarity about him. He was stiff as a board, not limber at all. But a great kid who worked hard. He didn't move that stiff, it was just in his strokes."

In his senior year of high school Smith abandoned basketball so that he could work out regularly at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, where Tolley was the pro. The local tennis association paid Tolley to iron out the kid's kinks, especially in his forehand volley, and Smith improved steadily. Yet it was not until June that Tolley decided to offer him a scholarship to USC. It was a wise decision. Smith went on to be national collegiate champion, and USC won the NCAA title all three of his varsity seasons.

With his pupils Tolley is like a stereo freak fussing with speakers and components. He is constantly tinkering—changing this, installing that, suggesting, adjusting, sitting in the stands during matches and quietly telling his tiny tape

Margie doesn't doubt that Stan will make it.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERRY O'NEILL

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#### STAN SMITH *continued*

recorder about every mistake he sees and what should be done about it. Since tennis players do not have any built-in dials to twirl, getting changes programmed into them is usually not easy, but Smith was always receptive. Toley remembers fiddling with his forehead—getting him to use more wrist—in the middle of the 1966 college season, something that would throw most players off their game. Smith made the adjustment readily.

Their relationship has continued. At Forest Hills last summer Smith was struggling against Jaime Fillof of Chile. Rain delayed the match, and Toley broke away from some meetings in Manhattan to get to the courts. He noticed that Stan's feet "were just like they were frozen." It is Toley's theory that when Smith lacks confidence it shows up in his feet and he becomes as nimble as a cigar-store Indian. Toley called to him from the stands, Smith heard, and he started to get up on his toes and be in motion as Fillof hit his serve. Later, Toley saw that Smith was throwing the ball up too far in front of his body on his second serve. He called out advice, and Smith followed it right away. The tips probably made the difference, because Smith won in a fifth-set tie breaker.

At Estero Beach, Toley used a videotape recorder to capture the play of Smith, van Dillen and Ramirez, then analyzed their every tic during long sessions in his room. The coach is a walking recorder of the sport, and his pupils listen when he runs off the reels in his mind and highlights a few frames.

"Don Budge had great eyes," he may say. "He used a 17-ounce bludgeon, three ounces heavier than anybody uses today, but he still got it back in time because his great eyes helped his anticipation." Or, "There was a famous match between Jack Kramer and Frankie Parker at Forest Hills, one of Kramer's last matches as an amateur. Jack lost the first two sets hitting returns two feet wide. He had so much confidence that he kept hitting them the same way; they started going in and the match was over."

Toley did not make any radical changes in Smith's game at Estero, just intricate little things to ensure that the prize watch keeps better time, things that fans in front of the tube or at tournaments this year will be able to notice only if they know what to look for.

Toley thinks Smith has been too timid on backhand service returns, waiting



to make sure where the ball is going, then making sure to get the ball back. Toley had him stand closer and got him to start moving almost before the server struck the ball, "maybe missing a few more balls but making some outright winners more often or some real tough shots more often."

On offense, Toley made him serve and then hustle to the net more quickly. Once again, Toley felt Smith had been too cautious. "He was running to about a step back of the service line," he says, "or at most, to the service line, and kind of waiting to see where the ball was going to go, and then moving. Well, I'm trying to get him to move inside that service line, then he'll still have time to wait. The interval will just be shorter. Then he'll be up there close where if someone does have a weak return, he can simply gobble it up at the height of its arc and do something with it."

Toley also worked on making Smith gamble more at the net, anticipating instead of always being dead sure; on putting more underslice on volleys for better control; and on serving "with a little more explosion" instead of a "continual rhythm." Toley feels that Smith has been "trying so hard not to miss the ball and not get passed, that his movements weren't natural enough."

At the end of the sessions at Estero, Smith's strokes looked natural and powerful, and Toley was satisfied that he had made a contribution. That kind of satisfaction is the only kind of pay he gets from Trojan alumni, who manage to show their appreciation in other ways. His former players, people like Smith and Davis Cup Captain Dennis Ralston, organized a testimonial for Toley last spring and one of the gifts they gave him was an all-expense trip to Wimbledon this summer. He has never been there and he wants to add new reels of tape to his brain.

Two days after New Year's, Smith and his bride took off for their home at Hilton Head Island in South Carolina, where there is room for only a few of their wedding presents. A few days later they left for the CBS Classic in Puerto Rico, the beginning of a new cycle of pressure and jet lag. If they are lucky, they might get all of seven weeks at home this year.

"But now I'm really eager to play," says Smith. "It's a lot different story than the last three years."

END

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Av. Per Cigarette, FTC Report Oct. '74

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## HE HAS THE WORD FROM SICILY

When Owner Nick Mileti spouts old-country sayings, three Cleveland pro teams must listen

by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM



Now that we've got this building up, we're not going to sit around sucking our thumbs," cried Nick Mileti, his voice rattling around the sports palace he has built on a patch of farmland 25 miles south of downtown Cleveland. "Now we're going to fill this place." A wolfish grin escaped from the shadow cast by Mileti's scimitar-shaped nose. "If not, I'm losing my you-know-what."

Holding a paper cup filled with Scotch, Mileti waited for his listeners to finish laughing. They were businessmen and newspaper people from Ashland, Ohio, the latest in a succession of communities in "Coliseum Country"—which is how Mileti refers to northeastern Ohio—whose VIPs have been invited to tour the new building. Mileti, a bouncy little man who bears a resemblance to Danny Thomas, makes it a point to be present on all such occasions. He never tires of promoting his \$25 million baby and now, standing on the main floor, he pressed on. "We're bringing you hockey and basketball. We're bringing you Elton John and Olga Korbut and the circus. We're gonna go, man, go!"

The visitors from Ashland left, and Mileti drained his Scotch. Talking to his guests, he had exhibited the same enthusiasm with which he once spit out siss-boom-bahs as a cheerleader at Cleve-

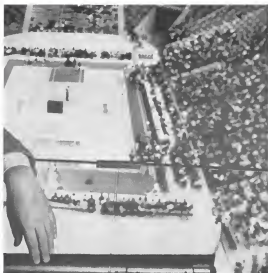
land's John Adams High School. Mileti grew up on the city's tough southeast side, the son of poor Sicilian immigrants, and here he is today, at 42, with a spanking-new 20,600-seat arena to add to holdings that include the NBA Cleveland Cavaliers and the WHA Cleveland Crusaders, both of which he runs as president. Though he has been sharply reducing his involvement in the Cleveland Indians during recent months, he remains, in name, president and general partner of the baseball club, too. Still in Mileti-owned radio station WWWE, which carries play-by-play broadcasts of all three teams, and you have an owner as busy and ubiquitous as Charles O. Finley or Jack Kent Cooke at their most acquisitive.

Nick Mileti did not come to ownership through great personal wealth, however, nor through family connections. Since sports is his chief business—as opposed to pastime—he is in no position to treat his teams and their athletes as adult playthings to be shown off and hobnobbed with. Mileti emerged as a sports entrepreneur only six years ago and has had to beg and borrow all the way. Operating in an era of rapid expansion in professional sport, Mileti put together syndicates of private investors to buy the teams he wanted, then installed himself

as boss of each. But he has had to answer to major shareholders, not-so-silent partners and, above all, banks: he owns 39% of the WHA Crusaders, but has never held more than 30% of the Indians or the Cavaliers.

It is a tenuous position, and Mileti seems determined to enjoy it while he can. Despite living in gray, industrial Cleveland, he knows where to find the night life, and he comes on as the city's jivest middle-aged businessman. Bopping along busy Euclid Avenue, he is a study in Sicilian soul as he greets traffic cops ("Hey, man, what's happenin'?!"), snaps his fingers and makes big with the beat-toe action. He also steals admiring glances at his reflection in store windows—and why not? It was Mileti who introduced velour jump suits and \$300 Bill Blass Ultra suede shirts to the shores of Lake Erie.

The payoff is that Mileti is a bigger celebrity in Cleveland than most of his athletes. During games he moves through the stands glad-handing fans and signing autographs. "Hey, didn't Austin Carr look good tonight?" somebody asks after a Cavaliers game, Mileti shrugs. "To tell the truth, I didn't notice," he confesses, dismissing the subject. With a flourish, he adds, "My life is a Van Gogh painting. It's all broad brush-



strokes. I'm not interested in details."

It would be nice to report that this painterly approach has been rewarded with world championships, SRO crowds and fat profits. Instead, Mileti's three teams lost upwards of \$3 million in 1973, and the red ink continued to flow last year. Only the Crusaders have enjoyed winning seasons, and until they and the Cavaliers moved into the newly opened Coliseum this season, both were condemned to play before sparse crowds in the Cleveland Arena, a Depression-era barn that Mileti, naturally, also owns. Mileti's personal stake in his \$45-million operation is barely \$1 million, and most of that is borrowed. He is so extended that some detractors believe the Coliseum only too apt a name, that the collapse of another Roman Empire could be just around the corner.

For his part, Mileti argues that the Coliseum is precisely what will turn his fortunes around—that, plus a couple of championship-caliber teams. In support of this view, Mileti never tires of spouting what he calls old Sicilian sayings, homilies that, in truth, also include proverbs from the Chinese and Yiddish, plus inspirational quotations from Churchill, Emerson and Norman Vincent Peale. Ask him about his financial reverses, and he replies with a wave of the hand,

"There's an old Sicilian saying that between every dream and reality are 200,000 nuts and bolts." Press him on when he expects to begin to turn a profit and he replies, "There's an old Sicilian saying: 'You know how to eat an elephant? One bite at a time.'" And while Mileti may not know how Austin Carr fared, he can, on cue, ruminate on the social significance of sport: "There's an old Sicilian saying that bread gives life and flowers give the reason for living. Sports are like flowers."

Even in the face of such eloquence, doubts about Mileti's financial stability have long existed. They reportedly contributed to the decision by the NHL to reject his bid for an expansion franchise, a rebuff that forced Mileti to settle for a team in the new WHA. Similar doubts were expressed by fellow American League owners when Mileti first wanted to buy the Indians in 1972. Stockholders soon were grumbling that nobody was minding the store, and Mileti, while remaining as president, eventually surrendered day-to-day control of the club to others. Last fall, with the bank whose loan he used to take over the baseball team starting to make noises, he sold off a \$300,000 chunk of the Indians—roughly half of his personal holdings—and more of his stock is now on the market.

Speculation runs high that he will soon bow out of the club altogether.

But Mileti refuses to acknowledge feeling any financial strain whatever. Instead, he invokes his broad-brush approach. "What I like best is to put deals together," he says. "Then I get restless and move on." As far as it goes, the explanation is accurate. Since the Indians were the only one of Mileti's three teams unaffected by the opening of the Coliseum, they suddenly were the loose thread in his grand tapestry, and there is no doubt that his interest in the club waned. During last fall's negotiations to hire Frank Robinson as manager, Mileti seemed far more interested in flying off to Las Vegas to persuade another Frank of note—Sinatra—to star at the Coliseum opening.

One morning, Indian Executive Vice-President Alva (Ted) Bonda called Mileti to discuss the club's new TV contract. "Tomorrow's a historic day at the Coliseum," he heard Mileti trumpet into the phone. "We're pouring cement on the main floor. Think of it!" Unable to focus Mileti's attention for long on the TV contract, Bonda gave up and hung up.

One who is as well aware of Mileti's restless nature is the Cleveland Browns' Art Modell, the town's No. 1 owner until Mileti upstaged him with three teams. Then, in late 1973, it became known that the ubiquitous Mileti had helped launch the upstart World Football League and had bought one of the original franchises Cleveland was stunned and so was Modell. "I admire Nick's insatiable appetite for professional sports," was his tight-lipped comment.

Privately, Mileti assured the Browns' boss that he had no intention of starting another football team in Cleveland. Sure enough, he sold the WFL franchise for an estimated profit of \$450,000 and it surfaced as The Chicago Fire. What Mileti did not tell Modell, but what a local reporter learned, was that he was meanwhile urging another WFL owner to field a team just 60 miles away in Akron. Mileti at first denied the story but now treats it as another detail that has no place in a Van Gogh. "To tell you the truth," he pleads, "I don't remember whether I recommended a team in Akron or not."

cleveland

Mileti-watchers are not unanimous on the question of what makes Nick tick, though all agree that he has an enormous appetite for hard work. Mileti puts in 18-hour days, running behind schedule at all times and seeing little of his wife Gretchen and 9-year-old son Jimmy. Ze-roing in on the problem, Mileti confesses with a helpless air, "The whole thing is that I love people." Tom Embrescia, the youthful manager of WWWE, elaborates, "Nick goes to see the president of a company and winds up spending more time talking to the porter." Steve Zayac, Mileti's top aide, says, "Nick doesn't forget where he comes from."

When he is done working, the gregarious Mileti has a nightly routine that might begin with cocktails at the Pewter Mug and conclude only when the final *abracadabra* are exchanged in the small hours in a jazz-cum-sports hangout called the Theatrical Grill. In between, he might squeeze in dinner at the Keg and Quarter, where he can count on the VIP treatment from owner Jim Swings: "Let this breathe a minute, Nick," Swings said to him on a recent evening, uncorking a bottle of Chateau de Pressac '67.

"Listen to him," roared Mileti. "Ten years ago he couldn't *spell* wine. Now he's letting it breathe."

"Ten years ago," replied Swings evenly, "you didn't know what a fast break was." Mileti banged on the table in delight.

Mileti may be a neophyte in sport, but he is no stranger to Cleveland—an unqualified plus at a time when carpetbaggers roam the landscape of sport, buying and moving teams without regard for roots or geography. Mileti gives the impression of genuinely caring about Cleveland. Distressed that his hometown ranks just behind Buffalo and Philadelphia as the butt of urban jokes, Mileti says passionately, "There's an old Sicilian saying: 'Don't curse the bridge that carried you across.' Translation: Cleveland is the greatest city in the world. It's my city." Hurrying up to Mileti at one of the Coliseum's open houses, a woman visitor cried, "This place is so beautiful, it's hard to believe I'm in Cleveland." She wasn't, of course, being 25 miles out in the country, but Mileti was touched by what the woman said. "That's the bottom line, when people come up to you and say, 'Thanks for everything, Nick.'"

Mileti also receives thank-yous, perhaps surprisingly, from his financial

backers, who include some of Cleveland's most prominent businessmen. Scarcely happy with their losses—the real bottom line—they nevertheless know that sports investments can make handy tax write-offs. They also expect that the seemingly endless spiral in franchise prices will someday enable them to recoup at least part of their money. Noting that the Browns and Indians were Cleveland's only major league teams until Mileti came along—and that the troubled Indians were threatening to leave town—Mileti's backers also admit to impulses that go beyond dollars and cents.

"If Mileti were opening a widget factory, I wouldn't have invested," concedes Banker Bruce Fine, who has put \$300,000 into Mileti's three teams. "But sports is something I've always wanted to be in." C. Carlisle Tippit, a manufacturer with a large stake in the Indians and Crusaders, says, "I've made money in Cleveland and I wanted to put some back. Nick Mileti is the man who made things happen." Another heavy investor is the Indians' Ted Bonda, a former board chairman of Avis Rent-a-Car. Bonda once called Mileti's operations an "empire built on marshmallows." Now he says, "We all turned to jelly when Nick came around, but only because we wanted to. Sports is a Walter Mitty thing, and Nick's enthusiasm was infectious."

In point of fact, Mileti stumbled into sport by accident. Practicing law in the Cleveland suburb of Lakewood, he served as a public prosecutor and as president of the Jaycoos, then founded a consulting firm that specialized in low-cost housing for the elderly. In 1967, to raise money for Bowling Green, his alma mater, he promoted one of the school's basketball games at the Cleveland Arena. "It drew 11,000," he recalls. "I figured if I could get 11,000 one night, I could get 8,000 every night." The first person singular tends to obscure the fact that Bowling Green's foe that evening was a major attraction, Calvin Murphy-led Niagara.

Bitten by the promotional bug, Mileti contacted a Wall Street banker named Leo McKenna, an old Army pal. McKenna managed investments for the heirs of inventor Charles F. Kettering, and Mileti persuaded him to put up half the \$1.9 million needed to buy the Cleveland Arena and the Barons, the city's minor league hockey team. "We closed the deal on Sept. 27, 1968, at 6:10 p.m.," says Mi-

leti, investing the moment with where-it-all-began importance. Since neither property was exactly a bonanza, it was obvious he was playing for bigger stakes.

While continuing to tap the Kettering riches, Mileti also began invading Cleveland's banks and boardrooms for support. When the Cavaliers, an NBA expansion club, were born in 1970, he helped finance the \$3.7 million deal by making an innovative \$5-per-share offering to the fans. This was followed in 1972 by an extraordinary six-month splurge. First, Mileti paid \$5.5 million for NBC's local AM and FM radio affiliates. Next he shelled out \$10 million for the Indians. Finally, he paid \$250,000 for the then playerless Crusader franchise. A deal had been in the works to have the Indians play part of their "home" schedule in New Orleans, but Mileti scotched it, flying to that city on a disengagement mission reminiscent of Eisenhower's journey to Korea.

"I told them in New Orleans I was sure they had a dynamic city," Mileti says. "I also said I didn't want to know them."

Clevelanders might well have imagined they were witnessing the second coming of Bill Veack, the Indians' super-showman of the 1940s. But unlike Veack, Mileti had trouble transferring his knack for self-promotion to his teams. With Mileti and a small staff running three newly acquired big-league teams at once, the Indians solicited season tickets on stenciled letters riddled with misspellings. Nor did it create much goodwill on Bat Day when kids were required to present coupons from Burger King in order to receive "free" bats.

"Everything happened too fast," says Mileti, acknowledging early mistakes. "But other people waited till the timing was right, and that's why Cleveland, the eighth largest market in the country, didn't have major league hockey or basketball. That's why the Indians were leaving. Think of it! Pittsburgh had hockey. Seattle had basketball. Seattle!"

Mileti's go-man-go enthusiasm sometimes results in his getting truly carried away. Although he had almost no personal involvement in the Indians' decision to hire Frank Robinson, he plumed the deposed Ken Aspromonte and said emotionally, "I went to bat for you, Ken, but I was outvoted." He told others, "It was time for a change. Frank Robinson became manager because I wanted him to." Another attack of hyperenthusiasm

recently led him to buy an estate, a 46-acre spread with a rambling Tudor house set among orchards, stables and fountains in the suburb of Gates Mills. Mileti paid \$500,000 for the place, presumably drawing on the windfall from his WFL franchise killing.

"Since I'm not home very much, the next best thing is to make life easy for my family," Mileti says. He does not mention the possibility that he might better have applied the \$500,000 to reducing his substantial business debts.

None of his wheeling and dealing, however, prevents Mileti from solemnly attesting to his own essential integrity. "If your name is Mileti and you make 50 cents, everybody right away says Mafia," he complains. "Well, I've been checked out a thousand times now." Ted Garver, Mileti's attorney, says, "Forget Nick's swinging image. He's the squarest, straightest guy you'll ever meet." Aides confide that Mileti was urged at midseason a year ago to sell Lenny Wilkens, the Cavaliers' star guard. Without him, it was reasoned, the club might finish last and thus qualify for the coin toss for UCLA's Bill Walton, then considered a super plum.

"It's not right," ruled Mileti, shutting

off debate. "Things like that have a way of coming back and biting you." Wilkens left at season's end. He is now players-coach of the Portland Trail Blazers, which also wound up with Walton.

But the Cavaliers are playing much better this season just the same, and the perennially upbeat Mileti can find other causes for cheer. WWWE, unprofitable when he bought it, is in the black. The money-losing Barons were scrapped after moving to Jacksonville, and Mileti hopes the local school board will take the Cleveland Arena off his hands. And although Mileti cannot claim much of the credit, prospects have brightened for the Indians: a pennant contender much of last season, they drew one million fans for the first time in 15 years and their deficit fell from \$1.5 million to \$350,000.

As for the all-important Coliseum, those who predict it will flop tend to be the same people who reckoned Mileti would never get the building up in the first place. To do so, the ex-chefleader laughed at tight money, brushed aside court challenges by environmentalists and thumbed his nose at Cleveland's business Establishment, which wanted the Coliseum downtown.

The semi-rural location defies the

widely held assumption that indoor sports complexes must be situated near public transit and population centers. Still, the site is handy to freeways, and Mileti has his eye on all of Coliseum Country. "In Cleveland we'd have Lake Erie at our back," he says. "Out here we've got five million people within a 50-mile radius."

Early-season crowds at the Coliseum for the Crusaders and Cavaliers have been bigger than they were at the Arena, but still disappointingly below the per-game averages—12,000 and 9,000 respectively—needed to begin showing profits. Attendance was unquestionably hurt by a seven-week newspaper strike that ended just before Christmas, and Mileti is encouraged that 1974-75 bookings for such major attractions as rock concerts and ice shows total nearly 170—to say nothing of the coup he hopes to bring off: a March fight between Muhammad Ali and Chuck Wepner. Spectators have oohed and aahed over such amenities as upholstered chairs and two telecreens for instant replay, not to mention unobstructed sight lines. There are also 96 lounge suites, private 10-seat boxes that go for \$11,000-plus a year. Mileti claims to have found takers, mostly large corporations, for them all.

Not long ago the *Cleveland Press*'s Bob August wrote of Mileti, "Even a master juggler can get too many oranges in the air." Mileti responded with a touch of humor: "I'll tell the papers what to print when I own them." In fact, Cleveland's No. 1 sports entrepreneur suffers such unolicited advice well. One evening he and several friends were having a sociable time in a suburban bar when a blond, eager-eyed young man approached their table. "Remember me?" the stranger demanded. "I met you in here last year."

"Nice to see you again," Mileti said noncommittally.

The young man's view of Mileti apparently corresponded with that of Bob August. "If you're smart, Nick, you'll sell the Tribe," he said.

"You really think so?" Mileti asked playfully.

"I sure do."

Mileti beamed. "Then it's settled. I'll do it."

But the stranger kept chirping away, and Mileti, as usual, grew restless. "Want to know something?" he asked at last. "The fact is, I've never been in this place before in my life." **END**

MOD-SUITED MILETI ISN'T MODEST ABOUT SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS AT HIS COLISEUM





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# OLD GODS, YOUNG GODDESSES



Idols of reclining Mayan deities known as Chacmoals are scattered through Yucatán, gazing at tourists with mild astonishment. The Chacmoals ain't seen nuthin' yet. A vast resort master-planned by the Mexican government has just opened on Cancún, a 14-mile-long island off the peninsula's northeastern tip, which in time will accommodate

a million visitors a year. Some of the first arrivals no doubt will be clad in swimwear owing the barest of debts to the filmy fabrics used in competition, and they'll really make the Chacmoals' eyes pop. Visibly impressive on the right is Christie Brinkley, gambling in straps and rings by Giorgia Di Sant' Angela (\$60). —Jule Campbell

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WALTER IOOSS JR.







Cheryl Tiegs wears a smile—and a stretch terry poncho by Sant' Angelo for Raynolds (\$29). Her bikini on the cover is by Anne Collins for Bobbie Brooks (\$22).



Statuesque (6 ft. 5' 12") water skier Margaux Hemingway, Papa's granddaughter, sports a shiny 4-ounce lycra tank suit striped for action by Monika for Elan. (\$289).

Sitting pretty on a sandy ledge, Christie snolders in a quick-drying lycra stretch tank suit trimmed with creamy lace, like a chaise, by Gottex of Israel (\$42).

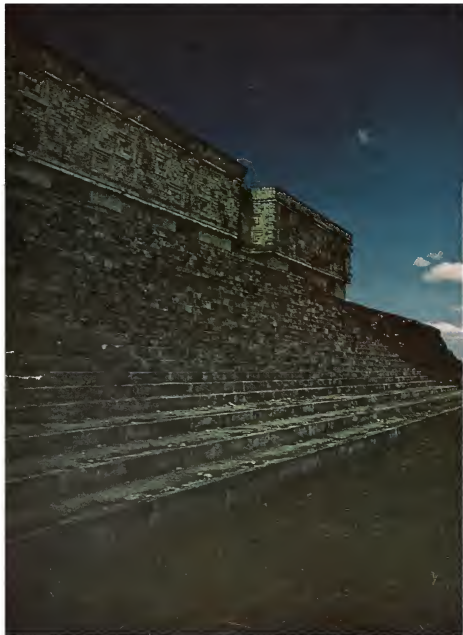




Gloriously recumbent off one of Cancún's coral sand beaches, Christie glitters in a

gauzy, stretch 1½-ounce tank suit by Anne Collins for Bobbie Brooks (\$25).

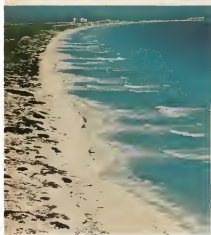






Cancún is a resort with a magnificent past, the brooding Mayan ruins being but a few hours' car ride away. Here at Uxmal are

the remains of the Palace of the Governor and, gleaming in the background, the oval 125-foot Pyramid of the Magician.





# NO MORE MAÑANAS

Forget the stereotypes. A vigorous band of Mexican technocrats with misgivings about Acapulco is creating a new resort on Cancún

by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM

The night students sat at rows of desks in the elementary school in Cancún City, a new town on the northeastern tip of Mexico's Yucatán peninsula. Facing the others nervously, a teen-ager in a floral shirt was saying, "To impress tourists, you must be clean. You should have a . . . uh, haircut and . . ." He urgently consulted a slip of paper. "You should be shaved and neatly dressed. Your shoes, uh, uh, . . ."

The audience of would-be bellboys, bartenders and chambermaids listened in sympathetic silence. Like the speaker, most were of Mayan extraction, small and copper-hued people whose ancestors once built a flourishing civilization in the Yucatán jungle. Now the descendants were building something, too, a vast tourist complex promoted by the Mexican government on the island of Cancún, a 14-mile sliver of sand just off the peninsula's Caribbean coast. These Indians of Yucatán had linked Cancún to the mainland with a short causeway, and were now lining its shores with hotels, condominiums and the manifold amenities favored by tourists.

They had also built, on the flat and wooded mainland,

Cancún City. Equal parts model city and construction camp, the city's population had mushroomed to 20,000 in less than three years. Many of Cancún City's residents had traded thatched huts for masonry cottages, and quite a few had enrolled in night classes to learn the intricacies of mixing drinks and carrying baggage. The school also dealt with culture shock. Since most modern Mayas sleep in hammocks, aspiring chambermaids were shown what a bed was before learning how to change linen. And because many Mayas are shy, all the students were brought together one evening a week for poetry readings, music and recitations of the kind the teen-ager in the floral shirt was struggling to deliver.

"You must wear a *sonrisa*—a smile," he was saying. He himself, however, was close to tears. "You must have, uh, uh, . . ." He hurriedly concluded, biting off the last word in frustration, "you must have *confianza*."

It is a mark of confidence that Cancún is already welcoming its first visitors, the advance guard of an influx expected to reach one million visitors a year by 1993. The New York City ad agency of Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample re-

*continued*

One of five hotels now open, the 205-room Cancún-Caribe overlooks miles of untouched shore as well as an artful seaside park.

cently launched what Account Executive I. Martin Davis calls the "opening salvo" of a campaign to introduce Cancún (pronounced kahn koon) to U.S. sunseekers. "Mayan kings wintered here 1,000 winters ago," the ads proclaim. "Now you may join the procession." But Davis concedes, "Cancún isn't for everyone yet. Right now it's for the explorer, the guy who wants to be not just the first on his block to go somewhere but the first in his whole state."

The pitch is to visit Mexico's newest resort not before it is spoiled but before it is ready. The whisper of trade winds is often drowned out in Cancún by the roar of bulldozers, and vacationers must also contend with potholes in the streets, clouds of construction dust and a scarcity of working telephones. In their hotel rooms, guests may find it as difficult to bounce a peso off their beds as off, well, a hammock.

But the explorers Davis has in mind will find exhilaration all the same. Though direct flights from places such as Miami, Atlanta and New York are not expected to begin much before next winter, a \$10 million airport has opened on the mainland 12 miles from Cancún, and scheduled airlines fly in from Mexico City and the Yucatecan capital of Mérida. The taxi ride from the airport is along a new highway that cuts through thickets of chickie-yielding *capote* trees. Soon Cancún City comes into view, its paved streets, landscaped plaza and small whitewashed houses a vision on the desolate coast. Then the taxi reaches the causeway and crosses onto the island.

But it is not so much an island as a sandpit, an L-shaped outcropping that shoots this way for a few miles, then veers off that way. Along the one road, which only now is starting to resemble the palm-lined boulevard it is destined to be, shiny new buildings rise up like a row of sugar cubes. The road passes condominiums, a large convention center and the almost obligatory Robert Trent Jones golf course, all of which are nearing completion. So are hotels like the 197-room El Presidente, run by a Mexican chain, and Western International's 250-room Camino Real. Going up at the tip of a promontory and overlooking both shallow lagoons and the open sea is a 300-room outpost of that purveyor of tropical hedonism, Club Méditerranée.

A dozen hotels, providing 2,000 rooms, will be open early next year; five are already in business. They include the lavish Villas Tacul, a cluster of individual casars, each a riot of hand-tooled copper sinks, handwoven tapestries and, depending on which you choose, fountains, patios and gardens. A five-bedroom villa, the biggest available, rents for \$250 a day, maid service included. There is also the Cancún-Cambe, with a scalloped beach, a labyrinthine pool and tennis courts under construction.

Lots have been set aside for Holiday Inn and Marriott, and work will soon begin on marinas and waterfront boutiques. But already much has gone up since Alan Saturn, a lawyer from Nashville, and his wife Nancy saw Cancún a year ago. At a party in Nashville, the Saturns had heard a visiting Mexican rave about Cancún. They impulsively contacted a travel agent, who somehow came up with confirmed hotel reservations. It was only after they flew to Mérida and made the four-hour drive to Cancún that they discov-



Mayas learn to clear table before serving dessert.

ered there were not yet any hotels or much of anything else.

"We reached the island, and a guard stopped us," Saturn recalls. "I waved my reservation and he pulled his gun. At dinner that night we wound up in the chow line with the construction workers. We finally found a place to stay 65 miles away." As for being the first in one's state to visit Cancún, Tennessee has long since been taken.

The men who bring you Cancún are not the Mexicans of myth and memory, those faceless people snoozing beneath sombreros by the roadside. Cancún's creators can be found in Mexico City's financial district hard at work for a government trust called Fonatur—a Spanish acronym for National Fund for the Promotion of Tourism. A Xerox 7000 hums in Fonatur's bustling office, and scale models of beach-front property are everywhere. The men of Fonatur do not take a siesta break. When they leave for the day they carry attache cases crammed with blueprints, maps and, one suspects, snorkeling gear.

It is Fonatur's mission to impose a measure of planning on a tourist boom that brought 3.6 million foreigners into Mexico in 1974. Nine of every 10 visitors were Americans, many of whom preferred close-to-home vacations at a time of economic woe. Along Mexico's rugged Pacific Coast the flood of sun-loving Americans has encouraged every little fishing village to dream of becoming the next Acapulco. As for the first Acapulco, its hills are encrusted with shams, its lovely bay periodically polluted and its oceanfront lined with high rises and Colonel Sanders *pollo frito* stands. Until now these problems have been assumed, in Mexico as elsewhere, to be the unavoidable price of successful tourism.

But Fonatur is out to prove otherwise. It is run by a tall, baldish, chain-smoking official who lived in the U.S. long enough to earn a master's degree in business from Harvard and to take as a trade one of Boston's blue-blooded Cab-

ots. In his cheery office Antonio Enriquez-Savignac says, "The government frankly wasn't happy with places like Acapulco. Private developers always called the shots, putting up their hotels and stopping at that. The government was called in belatedly to clean up sewage and modernize the airport. This cost money and created political problems. Since the government winds up doing it all anyway, why not develop resort areas ourselves?"

While Cancún is its first and biggest development, Fonatur has a similar project in the works at Ixtapa, up the coast from Acapulco, and smaller complexes planned for Baja California and Oaxaca. The government functions, in effect, as real-estate developer. In Cancún it quietly bought up the land—the island was uninhabited—and began installing \$50 million worth of "infrastructure," such things as electricity, highways and the airport. Meanwhile, it went after private investors.

But first a geography lesson was necessary. Before the money-men would consent to build hotels and the rest, Enriquez-Savignac and his aides had to show them how Mexico poked a pretty leg into the Caribbean, and how Cancún, at the big toe, is just a 70-minute flight from Miami—closer to mainland U.S. than San Juan or St. Thomas. They also pointed out how Cancún reaches toward shore, embracing mangrove-lined lagoons teeming with bonefish and lobster. These lagoons are linked by inlets darkened by overhanging branches and patrolled by snowy egrets and Louisiana herons. Other waterways lead to the sea, where dazzling white-sand beaches stretch for miles, sheltered by the northern edge of an extensive reef that continues southward to Belize.

The sporting potential of this coast is largely untapped. The reef of Yucatán has coral outcroppings and grottoes for snorkelers, and there are sunken Spanish galleons for the scuba crowd. It is an 80-minute ferry ride from the mainland to the nearby island of Cozumel, a tourist haven whose clear waters are popular with skin divers. Cancún's water can only be clear, too; last inhabited by the Mayas, the island has been frequented in the centuries since only by smugglers, native fishermen and a Mexican government official who used it as a trysting spot with his mistress.

To introduce prospective investors to Cancún, Fonatur hired as "leisure assistant" a swarthy, curly-haired Yucatecan named Rodolfo Leal, a fisherman's son from Cozumel. Leal took VIPs where the barracuda, mackerel or sailfish were biting, sometimes broiling their catch on the beach in banana leaves. He also dived for conch for the salad. Then he invariably asked slyly, "Dessert?" He would vanish up a palm tree, and return to lay freshly sliced coconut before his wide-eyed guests.

So fully did Fonatur overcome initial resistance—Rodolfo Leal surely deserves some of the credit—that private investment in Cancún now exceeds \$200 million, with Mexicans accounting for a gratifying 87%. And Fonatur pulled it off largely on its own terms. While some of Cancún's buildings, taken individually, would look at home in San Juan or Miami Beach, zoning keeps them low-slung and well-spaced. It is whispered that one of the things holding up Holiday Inn's ground breaking is Fonatur's adamant

objection to the U.S. chain's garish sign. Vigilance takes many forms. When a small Mayan temple was unearthed during construction of the golf course Fonatur pressed for design changes; the temple now overlooks the 9th fairway.

Fonatur also talks of setting aside bird sanctuaries and wildlife preserves. Says Enriquez-Savignac, "When you put a bulldozer in the jungle, you are changing things, but we're trying to keep everything compatible with the natural environment. This is part of what we're selling. Twenty years from now guests should still be able to put on masks and see the fish. Or watch the ocean turtles laying their eggs under an August moon."

In relation to Acapulco, Cancún is a second front in Mexico's sun-and-surf offensive. In relation to Caribbean vacation spots like Jamaica or the Bahamas it is more like a sneak attack. Last fall Guillermo Grimm, Fonatur's marketing director, went to Martinique for the annual meeting of the Caribbean Travel Association. Some of the delegates from other islands, he recalls, were "rather cool."

This reaction is easy to understand. Many Caribbean islands have the same problems as Acapulco plus the crime and racial tensions of the largest U.S. cities. Yet here is a new challenger, close to the U.S. market and coming on strong. Press releases refer to Fonatur's staffers as "bright young technocrats." Statistics are churned out suggesting that Cancún has lots of sunshine, little rain. For a while Fonatur implied that Cancún had somehow been chosen by computers following an exhaustive talent hunt among sweet young beaches. Nor has it flinched from capitalizing on troubles elsewhere. "We don't have a racial problem in the Yucatán," Enriquez-Savignac says. "The Mayas are gentle and friendly."

It may help, of course, that the Mayas live in an area that has seen few strangers. With an economy overly dependent on henequen, a plant from which twine is made, the Yucatán has been historically isolated from the rest of Mexico, especially as one traveled eastward into Quintana Roo, the harsh and thinly settled area embracing the Caribbean coast. Quintana Roo graduated from territory to statehood just last October. Besides the Indians, its population includes the roanibouts who harvest the local chicle crop, many of them fugitives who found Quintana Roo to be a perfect hiding place.

Like the Yucatán in general, Quintana Roo abounds in wild pig, quail and jungle deer, not to mention Canadian ducks who wintered in these parts long before anybody heard of Cancún. An authority on the peninsula's wildlife is George García López, who for four decades has been organizing safaris out of Mérida, a busy and spotless city of 250,000. A tall, smooth-skinned man of 68 with a twitching eye that accounts for his nickname of *Semáforo*, García recently suffered the further indignity of having three teeth pulled. Afterward he sat in pajamas in his high-ceilinged den, dabbing a handkerchief to his mouth.

"There's every kind of hunting within 30 miles of Cancún," he said. "There's big game, too, but I must warn you—our government has just approved new license fees of \$480 for jaguar and \$240 for ocelot. I went to Mexico City and

*continued*

fought with the government for seven days, but for nothing." He winced, though it was hard to say whether because of his sore mouth or the memory of his unsuccessful lobbying, then added, "I took my wife along, and for seven days I fought with her, too."

But hunting is downplayed in Cancún, the assumption being that few guests of Villas Tacul or El Presidente will want to trudge through the wilderness to rendezvous with ticks and vipers. Hiking across the Yucatán's archaeological sites is another matter. Some of these ruins already receive tourists, and Cancún is within range of them via rented car or bus excursions organized by the hotels.

Perhaps the most appealing of the ancient Mayan cities is Uxmal, whose graceful temples and elaborate stone friezes date from the eighth century. Uxmal is a five-hour drive into the Yucatán interior, and visitors can combine it with an overnight stay in nearby Mérida. Somewhat closer is sprawling Chichén Itzá, with its massive pyramid, its grassy ball court—the largest yet found in pre-Columbian America—and its *cenote*, a gaping sinkhole into whoseinky waters Mayan priests flung humans for their deaths as sacrifices to the gods. And it is just a 90-minute drive along the Quintana Roo coast to the ruins of Tulum, a walled city on cliffs high above the Caribbean. Archaeologists consider Tulum less important than Uxmal or Chichén Itzá, but its builders obviously knew a thing or two about real estate.

Modern-day Yucatecans have long since misplaced the great architectural and mathematical gifts of their forebears, but most of them still speak Maya and their womenfolk can still be seen walking along lonely roads in their loose-fitting white *ampoles*. The Mayas have clung to their ancient ways despite the periodic oppressions of past Mexican governments, a sorry record that Cancún may help reverse. Not only does tourism create jobs, but Fonatur, anxious to avoid the kind of slums found elsewhere in Mexico, has been selling some of Cancún City's new residents two-bedroom homes with electricity and indoor plumbing for as little as \$5,000. It is a neat bit of welfare statism: the homes on the mainland are partly subsidized by Fonatur's land sales on the island.

But the men of Fonatur are no longer quick to imply that Cancún is some sort of utopia in the jungle. It is largely a matter of image. "Nobody wants to visit a place that sounds cold and Orwellian," says Guillermo Grimm. "Tourists don't like to feel programmed." A new official line has emerged. Fonatur's bright young technocrats now tell everybody that Cancún was selected by people, not computers.

**T**he question of image aside, Cancún is *not* perfect. This explains the beleaguered air of Jorge Gleesen, one of Fonatur's top on-the-scene officials. A bony, Ichabodian fellow in horn-rimmed glasses, Gleesen scoots around Cancún in a radio-equipped Volkswagen, trying to keep abreast of visiting bankers, investors, journalists and politicians' wives. "We're badly understaffed," he complains, adding sardonically, "Oh, well, this is Mexico. Everything will get done sooner or later."

Fonatur's good intentions are mocked in other ways, too. Frigid *torres* sometimes whip up whitecaps and bend palms, and early visitors have complained of being bitten by mosquitoes and stung by high prices. Gleesen and other Fonatur aides are also embarrassed by their inability to provide housing, subsidized or otherwise, fast enough in Cancún City. The result is exactly the sort of shantytown everybody hopes to avoid. Located on the city's outskirts, this so-called *colonia* evokes a frontier boomtown: rickety shacks, pungent odors and 5,000 souls huddled together with no plumbing and few electric lights, men outnumbering women six to one.

For now, anyway, the dusty and bony *colonia* is the liveliest spot in Cancún City. On a recent Saturday night, boxing matches, a street dance and a touring burlesque show were all going on at once when it suddenly started raining. What little electricity there was promptly failed. With most events washed out, a huge crowd stood in the mud and stared in silence at the sparks flying from a damaged high wire, their broad features illuminated by the flickering light.

Fonatur officials call the *colonia* "transitional" and insist that it eventually will be torn down. One who foresees problems in any case is Herbert L. Hiller, former executive director of the Caribbean Travel Association and now a professor at Florida International University. "They've created a company town and they're sticking great numbers of tourists on a fortress of an island," Hiller says. "The conditions could lead to the same resentments and political tensions you find elsewhere." Hiller also sees Cancún's superpowered venture into mass tourism as possibly ill-fated. "They're coming in with high technology and high energy consumption during an era of growing shortages. A lot of people are getting to be turned off by that sort of place."

Others seem just as sure that Cancún is about to become the Caribbean's next in spot. A Mexican clothing manufacturer has bullishly introduced a line of *guayabera* shirts under the Cancún label, and Mexican songwriters are busy turning out the Spanish-language equivalents of *Moon Over Cancún*. Since housing shortages and high prices are usually caused by heavy demand, even Cancún's problems can be seen as symptoms of success; indeed, enough explorers are arriving that some hotels are accepting reservations only on a seven-days-minimum basis.

All this brings a gold-toothed smile to the face of José Claudio Chac, one of the night students at Cancún City's elementary school. "I come from a village near Mérida, and now I'm a carpenter working on the Maya Caribe Hotel," he said after class one evening. "When it's finished I will become a bellboy, but I hope to go into hotel administration someday. Because of Cancún, we'll all eat better and dress better." It is worth noting that this go-getter's last name, Chac, is also the name of a Mayan god to whom the Indians of Yucatán have remained faithful through the centuries, worshipping him simultaneously with *Jesucristo*. But tourists are beginning to arrive in bikinis and wrap-around sunglasses, and perhaps Chac's hold will be weakened at last.

He is the god of rain.

END

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## He's making every minute count

**Vol frosh Bernard is the king of Kings—till brother Al grows up**

In the early days of basketball a team was considered a real powerhouse if its players produced a point per minute. A clear indication of how the game and its young players have progressed is that

scoreboard operators in the Southeastern Conference now barely can push their buttons fast enough to keep up with just one college freshman, 6' 6" Bernard King of Tennessee, who is averaging nearly a point a minute all by himself.

In the process King may be burying for good the already tarnished axiom that freshmen are not good enough—or poised enough—to start for the varsity. In fact, it has begun to seem the other way around to SEC fans, who have never seen a player so young do so much so well and do it so easily. Of course, they have not had a peek at King's 15-year-old brother Al, whom some recruiters consider the most advanced player for his age ever in New York City.

Seventh in the nation in scoring following Tennessee's 59-56 victory over Florida last week, Bernard King has managed to get his 28.3 points per game in less than 32 minutes of play. A Jumpin' Jack Flash around the basket and a deadly accurate shooter from the foul line on in, King's extraordinary .634 field-goal percentage explains how he can be so economical in these inflationary times.

When King exploded for 42 points in his debut against Wisconsin-Milwaukee, expert observers, including Tennessee Coach Ray Mears, felt that his totals probably would be cut in half when sophomore teammate Ernie Grunfeld's injured wrist improved. But although Grunfeld, whose high school team once scrimmaged against King's, has averaged 25.8 points per game since he returned to the lineup late last month, King has continued his hot shooting. Mears' two young New Yorkers have become the highest scoring duo in college basketball, and Tennessee (9-3) is still in a fight with Alabama, Auburn and Kentucky for the SEC title.

The 195-pound King, who wasn't old enough to vote when the season started, went on to score 34 points in a bruising matchup with Michigan's 230-pound C. J. Kupec, who used to be a tight end on the Wolverine football team. Tennessee then played in two holiday tournaments and King was MVP in both. And though Alabama beat the Volunteers 82-78, King gave the Crimson Tide a bad scare by sending 6'10" Center Leon Douglas to the bench with three fouls in the first four minutes of a game played on "Bama's court.

By the time the Vols lost 88-82 at Kentucky last week, King had become the center of attention for rabid "Cat fans who pelled him with oranges as he left the floor. His temper exploded when someone flicked a lit cigarette at him, and he had to be restrained from pursuing the spectator.

King comes from a poor section of Brooklyn, but attended a middle-class school, was not heavily into street life and, on orders from his mother, had to be home by nine every night. So while his buddies got high on drugs and acquainted with the police, King turned on Kojak and tried to pass geometry.

"It's funny how you have to learn to do things by yourself in the ghetto," he says. "Nobody ever showed me how to play ball. I just picked it up. I guess it's the same with learning to live. The guys I knew had already made up their minds about which way to go. People think it's your neighborhood that does it to you. I think it's what's inside you."

Among Mrs. Thelma King's rules was one forbidding her sons from playing playground basketball at night, even though there is a lighted court near their apartment house. This may help account for the simple efficiency of Bernard's game. He spent most of his high school career trying to impress coaches rather than neighborhood legends, and the difference is evident in his economy of motion. If King has a fault, it may be that his first fake is almost too fast, so that the man guarding him may still be on him only because of missing King's initial move.

Otherwise, Bernard has been so good that it makes the talk that brother Al, a 6'6" sophomore at Brooklyn's Fort Hamilton High School, is already his equal impossible to believe. That notion got started last May at an all-star game in which Bernard was playing. At half-time Al joined a pickup game and, before a Who's Who in college coaching, put on a dunking exhibition that left the crowd yelling for him to suit up in the second half. With an average of 28 points and 19 rebounds a game, Al already looks good enough to start at Tennessee, but the following scouting report, written about Al, is still a better description of Bernard:

"King may be the first computer player ever. If you need a field goal, push his



HIS HIGH-NESS HELPS KING AVERAGE 28

scoring button. If you need a rebound, press the carom button. If you are behind by 10 and need the ball, push the puffer button. If you are behind by three and there is no time left, push his three-point play button. For sure, he is too poised to ever push the panic button."

## THE WEEK

by HERMAN WEISKOPF

**EAST** Was Coach Lefty Driesell trying to psych out North Carolina State by having his Maryland players show up late for pregame warmups? "Now," he said. "Just talked too much." Once the Atlantic Coast Conference game began, his hot-handed Terps left Driesell almost speechless as they shot 65% and won 103-85. Not even David Thompson's 33 points could offset Maryland's three-guard offense, which manufactured 63 points, 30 of them by John Lucas. Maryland then scuttled Navy 87-73. Wolfpack Coach Norm Sloan, who retired the good-luck plaid jacket he wore so often last season, donned it for a game against North Carolina. He needed it. The lead changed hands 21 times before the Tar Heels went ahead by six points with 1:27 left in overtime. Then State's Phil Spence sank two shots and Thompson another, and the score was knotted. The Wolfpack went on to win 88-85 as Kenny Carr sank two free throws and Mo Rivers put in one.

A year ago a last-second goaltending call against La Salle's Joe Bryant gave Penn a two-point win. Last week Bryant made amends by pumping in a game-high 25 points, including the final two with six seconds remaining as the Explorers won 67-65, breaking Penn's three-year undefeated streak in the Big Five. Earlier La Salle had defeated St. Joseph's 68-60.

1. MARYLAND (32-0) 2. LA SALLE (24-1)

**WEST** "Boards! Boards! Boards!" was the scream that reverberated two nights in a row at Stanford's Maples Pavilion. Both evenings the Cardinals, who had the worst overall record among Pacific Eight teams (6-6) and the next-to-worst defensive and rebounding figures, responded against UCLA and Southern Cal. First they outrebounded the Bruins 35-34 and gave them their first loss of the season, 64-60. Mustachioed Rich Kelley, a 7-plus center who refuses to divulge his exact height, and 6'8½" Forward Ed Schweitzer each had 22 points for Stanford. Kelley also pulled down

13 rebounds and, unlike many other big men, showed a deft touch at the foul line. He earned all eight of his free throws as Stanford defeated UCLA for the first time since 1966. Against the Trojans, the Cardinals lost the rebounding battle 41-40 but won the game 67-66. Kelley had 30 points, was 10 for 10 from the foul line and converted both ends of a one-and-one for a 67-64 lead with 18 seconds left. While Stanford was winning on free throws, USC was losing on them. It made just two of eight. The Trojans, who had stopped California 85-65 the day before to take sole possession of the league lead for the first time since 1961, thus fell into a five-way tie for the top spot with a 3-1 record. Bunched with them were Stanford, UCLA (which came back to smother Cal 102-72), Oregon and Oregon State. Oregon opened its season record to 12-1, beating Washington State 69-68 on Ron Lee's 18-foot jumper at the buzzer and stopping Washington 68-66. The Beavers held off Washington 65-63 and Washington State 82-73.

Arizona State bounced UTEP 61-56 and trounced New Mexico 93-76.

3. UCLA (13-1) 5. ARIZ. ST. (16-1)

**MIDWEST** "Just let them try that karate defense at Knoxville," warned Tennessee Coach Ray Meach, who apparently felt his players had been victims of *Os-aki* and *Gedan-barai* blows while losing 88-82 at Kentucky. Kevin Grevey, who had 24 points for the Wildcats in that game, had 27 more as Kentucky held off Mississippi 83-82. Alabama, the Southeastern Conference's only unbeaten team, defeated Mississippi 74-71 and LSU 93-67 as Boomer Russell scored 45 points and Charles Cleveland 40. Auburn, with a roster composed entirely of underclassmen, tied Kentucky for second place. Before upsetting the Wildcats two weeks ago, the Tigers ate smashed potatoes. So last week they filled up on more of the same, then mashed independent Georgia Tech 87-75, Florida 84-68 and Vanderbilt 93-89. Freshman Forward Mike Mitchell had 42 points and 32 rebounds in the two SEC wins, and sophomore Guard Eddie Johnson scored 51 points.

Marquette Coach Al McGuire dimaxed a verbal aside during a game against South Carolina with a little hard-shoe routine that ended with him kicking his chair. Gamecock Coach Frank McGuire felt AF's attempt to intimidate the referees worked because "the next four calls went his way." Said Al, "We've all got to go to the marketplace occasionally." Playing at Marquette's place, South Carolina lost 69-60. Four nights later, against Notre Dame, McGuire went shopping again. Late in the first half, he yelled at the officials, "We don't even have

a foul shot yet." He also had a long pow-wow with the refs and, sure enough, by the game's end the Warriors had taken 15 foul shots, the first had tried 14 and Marquette had won 71-68.

Indiana beat Big Ten foes Northwestern (82-56) and Minnesota (79-59) to extend the country's longest winning streak to 19.

Miami of Ohio lost an double overtime at Ohio U. 92-90 amid 49 fouls and much confusion. The disorder began when the referees invoked the almost unheard-of double-foul rule. A personal was called against the Bobcats, but before the foul shot could be taken, a Redskin got a technical for shoving an Ohio player. That necessitated enforcement of the double-foul rule, which prohibits a team charged with a T from having an advantage in a situation where both teams have been fouled for fouls. So Ohio was awarded two free throws instead of the usual one. Later Miami thought it had won the game in regulation time only to have the refs rule that the Redskins' successful buzzer-shot came too late. Finally, with four seconds left in the second overtime, Ohio's Dave Terek put in a layup to make the score 92-90. He was fouled but never got a chance to take his shot as fans swarmed the court and the clock was allowed to run out.

1. INDIANA (36-0) 2. ALABAMA (15-1)

**MIDWEST** Much of the game between Drake and Louisville was slowed to a standstill as the Bulldogs resorted to a zone defense and the Cardinals played keepaway to try to force them into a man-to-man. But with the score tied 45-45 and 20 seconds to go, it was clearly time to step standing around. Louisville's Junior Bridgeman decided to drive in for a shot and the sudden activity must have unnerved him. He slipped and was called for traveling. Seconds later Drake's Ken Harris tried a baseline jumper, but, oops, the ball went into the hoop and out again and the game went into overtime. Bridgeman promptly put in two baskets and the Cardinals prevailed 55-53.

Missouri outshot Kansas 37 field goals to 30, overcame a 70-50 deficit to tie the score at 72-all and got 28 points from Willie Smith, 18 of them in a six-minute span. Nevertheless, the Jayhawks took their Big Eight opening 91-86. They got 27 points from Rick Stutle and made 31 of 39 foul shots to 12 of 22 for the Tigers. Oklahoma set a conference scoring mark, drubbing Colorado 113-62.

Memphis State crunched Buffalo State 138-92, pouring in 84 points in the second half, and whopped Missouri-St. Louis 130-79.

1. LOUISVILLE (12-0) 2. KANSAS (16-4)

## A question of survival

In a financial bind, lovely Hialeah last week opened its 50th season in an atmosphere of nostalgia, well tempered with both fear and hope

When Hialeah first opened its gates 50 years ago the population of Miami was only 69,754, and yet 17,000 people rattled out by car, trolley and even train to the then somewhat less than glamorous plant near the Everglades. In later years things got fancier—buck-stretch help no longer spent most of their time bashing snakes with baseball bats—and today Hialeah is one of the world's most beautiful racetracks. Its 219 acres are bedecked with hundreds of Australian pines and endless patches of bouganvillea and poinsettia. Flamingos decorate ponds in the infield, and in the aviary behind the walking ring chirps and strange noises come from parrots, jabiru storks, cockatoos, peacocks, pheasants and toucans. Hialeah visitors over the years included Gilda Gray, Barbara Hutton, Gene Tunney, Winston Churchill, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Joe Kennedy, Harry Truman. Millions of others came to play the horses in the poshest of posh atmospheres while getting close-up views of the best thoroughbreds in America. Hialeah was not only winter racing at its best, it was racing at its best.

Last week, under the direction of Chairman of the Board John W. Galbreath and President Lynn Stone, Hialeah did a nifty job of celebrating its 50th birthday. Putting on a brave face after losing more than \$3 million last season, Hialeah sold opening-day grandstand tickets at 50¢ (usual cost: 52¢) and treated the customers to a 10-race card, preceded by a parade of antique cars from the Vintage Automobile Club of Miami. The Budweiser team of Clydesdale horses took a turn on the main track, and there were striped blazers, straw skimmers and ukulele music. But even though the Miami area population has grown to more than two million, only 21,766 turned up for the heady nostalgia. Galbreath and Stone, noting that opening day attendance was better than that for

any day during last year's meeting, claimed to be delighted and hopeful. But the next afternoon, after picking up copies of the Miami News, their smiles turned to frowns. Racing Editor Art Grace wrote, "All the king's horses and all the king's men can never put Hialeah together again." Galbreath, who with nine others had spent \$21.5 million to buy Hialeah from Eugene Mori after the 1973 season, fumed, "Why would we put up money if we didn't want to continue at Hialeah? If we get support and encouragement, we'll pull through."

The financial trouble in which Hialeah finds itself is severe, but it may not be without solution. It all started when the track, which long had a monopoly on the desirable middle dates (mid-January to early March), lost them a few years ago to rival Gulfstream Park. Then the state began rotating the dates between the two tracks, an arrangement that satisfied neither. Many horsemen, accustomed to clockwork regularity of training habits and racing plans, grew tired of shifting schedules from year to year. Some began going to California, or leaving their horses at home or at one of the Carolina training centers. As a result, after last year's losing season, Hialeah's stockholders voted to sell their racing franchise to Gulfstream for \$7 million while retaining the track's property for possible sale. The acreage, assessed at \$13 million, has a market value of about \$21 million. "It seems that Hialeah is valuable property for almost anything but a racetrack," said stockholder John W. Hanes after attendance on Saturday, the meeting's second day, fell to 17,633.

Its location, near the Miami airport, is something less than a comfortable scenic drive from downtown Miami and the hotels of Miami Beach. Although it is only 13 miles from, say, the Americana Hotel, the trip can take 45 minutes. Miami's newest racetrack, Calder, a relatively minor league venture that re-

placed ancient Tropical Park, is 12 miles from the Americana but the trip takes only 20 minutes. Gulfstream is even closer, and has the added advantage of being in the belt of new high-rise apartments that have risen on the coast north of Miami. Stubbins John Galbreath says, "I don't go along with the location being the reason for poor attendance. In Los Angeles they drive a long way to get to Santa Anita, and they do the same thing to get to Belmont in New York. If you have a top product to offer, they'll show up."

But Florida racing, all of it, has suffered from the competition of winter racing in the north, and it has not always had the cooperation it might have from the state. "We need tax relief," says Stone, "and we really need the middle dates on a permanent basis."

After delays and indecision postponed the sale of the track to Gulfstream, Hialeah was told by the state that it had the middle dates for 1975, and to go on with the show. "We are getting on with it," says Stone, but, he cautions, "Four years ago Hialeah handled \$80 million in 40 days. If we do \$70 million this year, I'd call it excellent. It would give us a chance to survive. Gulfstream did \$70 million last year in the midst of a fuel crisis. If we can't match that now, with no real fuel crisis, we are in trouble."

Florida's racing gross in 1974 was around \$246 million, of which state taxes and the track's share came to about 17%, or nearly \$42 million. Gulfstream is now a more lucrative source of revenue than Hialeah, but in the long run it would appear that Florida racing needs the lovely old track, not just as another place to run horses but as the foundation of a healthy, well-rounded, attractive winter racing season.

The crowds this first weekend acted as though they were at a wake where, like Finnegan, the deceased might come alive again—for at least another year or so. If indeed the current season is a last rite, it will be a spirited one, with excellent racing in prospect. Three 1974 champions, Foolish Pleasure, Desert Vixen and Forego, are at Hialeah and will enliven things no end. And the guest of honor at the running of the Hibiscus Stakes last Saturday was Art Rooney, owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers, who knew hard times before his Super Bowl victory. It seemed a happy omen.

END



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## Here today, gold tomorrow

**Enter Cindy Nelson, a bombshell who could fire U.S. fortunes**

**I**t is too early for more than a feeble ray of hope, but there is a growing possibility that the U.S. Alpine ski team may be on the brink of something more than oblivion for the first time in many a snow. Let us be restrained—even skeptical—for false optimism and undelivered dreams have been for several years the hallmark of American ski racers. Freshest in memory is the wreckage of last winter when the U.S. was rudely trounced in the FIS World Championships at St. Moritz, finishing behind almost every nation on earth, including dainty little Liechtenstein.

At that point the U.S. coaching staff

had disintegrated once again, the team's leading racers (notably, three of the four Cochran children) were about to quit and both morale and talent seemed at a new low even for a team that had for years labored in mediocrity.

Yet now, like some frail phoenix, the U.S. ski team seems about to rise out of its own ashes. At the moment the primary source of American potential lies in the person of a strong, handsome blonde named Cindy Nelson. Born on the frozen shore of Minnesota's Lake Superior 19 years ago, she has determined Nordic good looks and the aggressive, even arrogant, style of hell-bent skiing that marks her as one of the two or three best women skiers in the world.

Nelson's specialty is the downhill, the most dangerous of Alpine disciplines, and there she comes smack up against the queen racer of them all, Austria's Annemarie Moser-Proell. This grim and powerful young lady, not yet 22, has dominated not only the downhill but the overall World Cup title for the past four years. And even today, with her newly svelte hourglass figure—having lost unknown and perhaps uncountable pounds in the past year—she is far ahead of the merely mortal women who compete against her. Already Annemarie has all but clinched her fifth consecutive World Cup title and early this month performed one of the more explosive feats in world skiing by winning three races—a downhill, a slalom and a giant slalom—in three days.

Still, it is Cindy Nelson of Lutsen, Minn., not one of the seemingly endless crowd of Austrian frikings, who is rocketing along on Mrs. Moser-Proell's skis. A year ago this month Cindy won the downhill at Grindelwald, Switzerland, the first defeat for Annemarie after 11 consecutive downhill victories. And just before Christmas it was Cindy who streaked to first place in a downhill at Saalbach, Austria. These two downhill victories—first in World Cup history by any American, man or woman—have elevated the lithe blonde to the top rank of world-class skiers. And besides the win at Saalbach, this season Cindy has finished second and fourth in downhills and sixth in a giant slalom, up till now her weakest event. She has bombed off to a total of 88 World Cup points, leaving her second only to Moser-Proell in downhill

and a creditable fifth in the overall standings. With the season less than half over, her scoring pace is nearly double that of any U.S. woman over the past five years.

Annemarie, who seems to have developed a gracious new personality to go with her sleek look, says of Cindy, "She is a very nice person and a very sound skier. When the piste is hard she will win again and again. She is very young and she is very hard on herself in her training. I think she may be as good as I have been in the downhill very soon. Perhaps already she is that good. In the years ahead Cindy Nelson may dominate the downhill as I have."

The U.S. Alpine director, Hank Tauber, says, "Cindy is the first American woman I have seen who has the potential to be a superstar. She has all the ingredients to be the best in the world. She has had a meteoric rise to where she is, and we shouldn't expect too much right away. Cindy had never even won a single World Cup point until last season, and now after her brilliant start this year we have to let the snow settle a little around her. It isn't fair to expect her to be consistently great so soon."

Last week there was a bit of snow settling. Starting as the first racer on a soft, flat downhill course in Schruns, Austria, Cindy was forced to plow snow through the entire run, a disadvantage that cost her a full second or more and left her in 16th place for the day. She also was suffering from a persistent cold and lingering headache. Still, she was unperturbed when discussing her poor showing. "Today there was no way I could have won starting first on a course this warm," she said. "But this season I really pride myself on being mentally prepared, and by that I mean that I look at things with a logical, optimistic reality. This was an exceptionally bad day, and I will just have to forget about it. I've never had more confidence in myself than I do now. I think I'm the best technical downhill racer in the world among the women. I really believe that. Of course, Proell is the best woman racer we've ever seen. Or maybe will ever see. She has everything. She is strong and she has desire and great equipment. She can go off like a bomb anytime. No one will be better than Proell."

Cindy Nelson's rise to stardom has not been easy. In December 1971, when she

was first with the U.S. "A" team, she did well enough (12th and 13th) in a couple of early downhill, then dislocated her hip and missed the Sapporo Olympics. The following year, recuperating, she did not race in Europe at all, and even last year, except for her surprise downhill triumph, she was not really at her peak, although she did finish fourth in the world in downhill. This season was different from the start. "I've made up my mind I can win the World Cup," Cindy says. "For the first time since I was 10 years old I've got a coach I respect. I'm in better condition this year than I've ever been. I'm trying to be logical about my racing and about my life and, logically speaking, I think I could even win the World Cup this year."

Mrs. Moser-Proell seems to have a lock on the cup, Cindy's logic notwithstanding. What's most illogical about Cindy Nelson is that she has come to be a downhill at all. At tiny Lutsen, 100

miles up the lake from Duluth, the training ground for downhillers is not a whole lot steeper than a parking lot. Cindy's parents run a neat but tiny resort and ski area with a vertical drop of just over 700 feet. There is scarcely space for a respectable slalom run. Yet Cindy began skiing before she was three, was given years of racer training as a child and now, grown to 5' 6" and 140 pounds, she is certainly on the verge of something big.

For the first time since 1970, when Billy Kidd won an FIS gold medal at Val Gardena, there are signs that the American men's team also is about to produce top skiers. Already this season two young American unknowns, Geoff Bruce, 22, of Corning, N.Y. and Greg Jones, 21, of Tahoe City, Calif., have performed surprisingly well. Bruce finished fourth in a slalom at Madonna di Campiglio. Jones, starting in 37th place for the giant slalom at Madonna, slammed through two startling runs to come out of the pack

and finish second. There have been other impressive performances among U.S. men starting far down in the crowd. Four Americans were in the top 15 downhill finishers at Garmisch, and the U.S. men have already gained more World Cup points in the first six weeks of the season than they totaled all last year.

Tauber says, "We count this year as a learning experience, but we're already way ahead of expectations in our results. We think we've got a stable organization this year, there aren't the conflicts on the team there have been in the past and, most important, we've come to the World Cup circuit this year with a whole different philosophy. We consider this a professional sport, and by that I mean that we are here to produce winners just as a professional team is supposed to win. We are not here to carry around a bunch of kids simply representing the good old U.S. in Europe. They are here to win." **END**

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The Boss



Vance

Dan Lasater made a fortune in the fast-food business before he was 30, retired, got into thoroughbred horse racing, hired a bunch of fat, shrewd men and fast had himself another winner



Goose



Finley

# Let's run it up a little

by Frank Deford

CONTINUED

**W**hatever happens to the economy, whether it gets worse or even a little bit better, it is going to be a month of Sundays before we see anything like the '60s again. You could run it up a little then. Growth was phenomenal, stocks go-go and, because everything performed, the best things had to outperform; a man in the '60s could still borrow on an idea, cash in on a dream and wind up with money in the bank. Dan Lasater, all of 32 now, may be the last of the breed. Sweeping up at a McDonald's in Kokomo, Ind. in 1960 at the age of 17, he became a fast-food monarch within five years. Then, at 28, he retired and today, a few years after he saw his first horse race, he is setting records as the leading thoroughbred owner of all time.

With 494 wins in 2,105 races, Lasater's stable earned \$3,020,521 in 1974, nearly double the previous mark, winning at tracks all over the country in all types of races. He raced horses, bred them, bought and sold them, a full-service juggernaut the likes of which racing had never seen. Yet while he was breaking new ground and records in a hide-bound sport that does not usually cotton to brash youth, his stable—an *oufit*, everybody calls that sort of organization around the tracks—managed to succeed without offending Establishment sensitivities.

"This is a business to us," Lasater says. "I think that's one of the reasons why we're so successful. Why, there's other people come into racing with something like \$3 million, and they hire some society trainer they wouldn't let run a tractor in their real business. I like horses, but I don't want to get sentimental

about them. I like to make money more, and this is one way to make money."

At The Jockey Club such commercial admissions would normally be considered crass, but Lasater speaks in subdued backwoods tones, so that even his bad grammar is a charming asset. While he can raise all kinds of hell with his buddies in his outfit, he is retiring and self-effacing at the track. Most men who come out of nowhere to strike it rich become condescending and require the gaudy trappings of wealth to reassure themselves of their new status. But Lasater just drifts along, unaffected, somewhere having acquired the most agreeable of patrician instincts.

He is a pretty simple fellow, preferring the company of his friends or, even more, that of fine-looking women. Other special tastes are Crown Royal whiskey—seems like just about everybody in the

oufit now drinks Crown Royal—and rock music, from whose lyrics Lasater derives the names of his horses (Hot 'n' Nasty, Honky Star). Instead of hotel suites, Lasater rents houses with the other guys. He is a charitable boss, effusive with praise. His grooms call him Dan, and he enjoys hanging around the track kitchen, shooting the breeze and flirting with the girls. Understand, he's nobody's fool, but he does have a reputation as a soft touch. He's not going to buy any hard sell, or the Brooklyn Bridge, but a little whimsy will do the trick.

One morning a while ago, at Oaklawn, in Arkansas, an old backstretch character named Uncle Otto came up to Lasater and tried to separate a ten from him with an especially fetching report of a hot tip. Lasater carries two rolls, the one a Mardi Gras, just singles and fives and maybe tens, the other containing the real



*Vince sits impassively for hours on a stable pony watching his horses work.*



long green. It was to that pocket he reached, and skimmed off a hundred for the old guy. "Run it up a little," he said, giving the C-note to Uncle Otto.

So what the classic old racing types say, as Lasater beats them again and again, is that he is a nice young man, good for racing. This month, in fact, he is to be presented with the prestigious Eclipse Award for being the outstanding

most dependable, structured place left on a discombobulated globe. It moves with a cadence all its own, unaffected by geography or dialect or the intrusions of the real world just beyond the gates. It is one of the last set pieces, one where all the people take their assigned places and all the events move inexorably—the way it used to be in real small towns.

Dan Lasater's town was Sharpville,

to see an old friend in Kokomo; he found a plant hiving there, and so the family moved down to Sharpville. For the next 10 years, until he married at 19, Dan, his older brother Don and their parents lived in an 8' x 24' trailer; there often was not enough food to go around. "We were some kind of poor," Lasater says. And yet he is reluctant to discuss his growing up for fear it will reflect unfavorably upon his parents, to whom he is devoted. He cannot see that the remarkable success of their son speaks a great deal for his mother and father.

Fernung recalls that Lasater had little spare time for anything much except girls. He was always working at odd jobs and dreaming the sort of fantasies poor children do. The last time he was with his mother, she pulled out an old high school yearbook and showed him the prophecy for Dan Lasater: *Mil-lionaire*. "I always wanted that," he says. In April 1960, just before he graduated, he took a job picking up litter at McDonald's for 60¢ an hour. Within the year, at age 18, he was the \$9,000-a-year manager.

"Pretty soon I got a little antsy, though," Lasater says, "and I started looking for a guy who would back me for a place of my own. I met Norman Wiese, who was the Olds dealer in town, and he trusted me." This affiliation resulted in Scotty's Hamburgers—15¢ a throw in those halcyon days. Shortly afterward, Lasater and Wiese and a third partner, Charles Kleptz, an architect, got the simple idea that was to make them rich: a fast-steak place based on McDonald's fast-hamburger concept. They called it Ponderosa, charged \$1.39 for a steak dinner and capitalized it with \$5,000 from Wiese, inasmuch as "Norm was still the only one of us with any money." This situation was shortly to be remedied.

"Well, it worked," Lasater says, "and so we ran it up a little. We built another and another, and then it just grew and grew. We woke up one morning and it was on the New York Stock Exchange. Pretty soon after that it was selling 70 times earnings, and in a while I was starting to set chunks over in the corner." The

*continued*



A few of Lasater's army of rovers watch Tiny, the groom, rake the area

owner in racing in 1974. In turn, Lasater, for all his harsh dollars-and-cents declarations, finds racing good for him. While he is, obviously, one of those rare people who have a talent for making money, Lasater is beguiled by the track. "I'm there every morning at 6:30 just to watch 'em train, because I love 'em. I love this business. I love the people. I just love it all."

At the track, Lasater seems to have found again the small town he grew up in. Why do you think so many people are drawn to a track, work around it, never leave it? Because they like horses? Aw, come on. Even for those who adore the animals, they are just the raw material, more lovable, perhaps, than the pincushions of Hawaii or the anthracite of West Virginia, but incidental products just the same. It is the community that holds the people. The backside of a racetrack is the

in north central Indiana, and it is a reasonable enough facsimile of the backside. His high school pal John Fernung, the principal's son at Sharpville High, says the town had a grocery store, a liquor store, a pool hall and an American Legion hall. "No movie theater. Hell, we were lucky to have a gas station." Just a few miles down Route 26 is Fairmount, a similar place, where James Dean grew up a few years before Lasater and went off to Hollywood to become the last farm-boy idol before America moved, hook, line and sinker, to the suburbs.

Young Dan left no mark upon the town he grew up in, but he had little opportunity. His family had come north from Searcy, Ark. when he was nine, when Mr. Lasater could no longer scratch out a living from the worn-out soil. He was on his way to the automobile factories of Flint, Mich. but stopped



*Groovy Popeye (above) and Warm sport the oddball nicknames typical of the backstretch*



chunks to which he refers were of cash. Lasater's early Ozark background was not submerged altogether in Indiana, and he still speaks with both the flavor and the courtliness of the South. He says, for example, "in a July minute" when he means right away, and he employs "ma'am" assiduously, even when he is trying to pick somebody up. The latter disarms a mere male bystander; it apparently works wonders when directed at a member of the opposite sex by the trim, well-mannered, blue-eyed, young, divorced multimillionaire.

Lasater became executive vice-president in charge of the Ponderosa operation ("I know my limitations"), and then he got pretty much bored with the whole thing. He got out and found himself looking around for something to do with himself and his chunks for the next 40 or 50 years. Around that time he ran into his old school buddy Fernung, who notwithstanding a droll and genial disposition fancies himself a roly-poly version of the Angel Lucifer. For reasons that are not clear, Lasater has the same feeling toward Jean and hungry men that Caesar had, and keeps about him sleek, round fellows, or "big 'uns," as he refers to them.

The round Fernung, a racing buff, introduced Lasater to the track, and soon they had a little operation known as the L & F Stable. It claimed a few muskrats at a place called Beulah Park. More important, Fernung—who left the outfit recently, amiably, to strike out on his own—also brought Lasater and David Vance together. "I'm not in the horse business, I'm in the people business," Lasater always says to explain things, and Vance turned out to be a major people acquisition.

Vance comes from Logansport, Ind., the other side of Kokomo, and he and Lasater had known each other slightly growing up. Thirty-four now, Vance is the son of a trainer, R. E. Vance; he was a jockey as a small boy ("We used to race around them Illinois bushes"). At 14 he was the second-leading rider at a meet in Las Vegas. His future as a rider was hampered by his burgeoning size, which is now 6'1" and, as the weathermen say, somewhere in the mid-to-upper 200s. Vance looks a little like Hoss, late of *Bonanza*, as a matter of fact, and mornings he wears chaps and a formless drome

hat to abet that impression. Taciturn and distant, he spits a great deal of tobacco as the day wears on.

Along about the time that the L & F Stable came into existence, Vance was just another struggling young trainer, working the bushes at places like the Deertrot Race Course. When the DRC meeting closed late in 1970, he decided to try the new track in Philly, Liberty Bell. Tricky Fischer, the outfit's assistant general manager, remembers Vance's situation very well.

Tricky is bigger than Big John, or even Vance, for that matter, and since he usually wears a small pair of dark glasses and a cagey smile, he looks like a giant raccoon on the loose. His father is a doctor who owns horses, and Tricky graduated from the University of New Mexico, but times were not real good for him, either, in the winter of '70-'71 when he left Sportsman's Park in Chicago for Liberty Bell, where he had a job as a track official. That illustrates, he says, as he begins his account of all this, how desperate racetracks were for officials at that particular time.

"But I'll tell you how bad it was for David," Tricky says, "because I come into Liberty Bell myself that time just before he did, and he was broke'n'me and he had a wife and a kid and a baby and one more on the way. What a Cinderella story this is.

"I had \$13 when I left Sportsman's, but I was too proud to call my parents. It was freezing cold and there was chewing gum all over the front seat because I'd had this girl in the car not long before, and when I made a move after her, she took her gum out and just sort of stuck it there, and soon, the way things were, it got spread all over the front seat. By the time I got to Ohio it's a blizzard outside, with the chewing gum inside, and by Pittsburgh the snow is butt high to a tall Apache. I slid sideways across most of Pennsylvania.

"But I got to Liberty Bell, to the one motel that will take me, and here comes David right behind me, with the whole family and 14 U-Hauls, dead broke. He is just in from Deertrot, where he blew it all on the last race on a horse named Bourbon Delight. The race is something like 14 miles and a sixteenth, and Bourbon Delight gets beat a nose. Vance says, one more jump. Here he has got a horse

continued

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## Run it up *continued*

that can do 14 miles and an eighth, and just his luck they card a race at 14 and a sixteenth.

"It was that kind of winter. Oh, we were broke. It was so bad, we were playing nickel-dime poker games, and there was hot six-dollar checks floating around. And Dave, oh, he had some dynamite clients. So I did him a few favors, what I could. They'd be a call from Deertrot, a man, say, looking for David Vance. Oh, I'd say, whatever for? Man say, well, this is the feed store in Deertrot and we have this bill. I'd say, sorry, no David Vance here. A few favors. So, that New Year's Eve at the bar he looks down to me, and he yells to the bartender, buy that tricky son of a bitch one, too. That's where I got the name."

At this point in Vance's career, while he was scuffling just to get even, Lasater decided to get serious about racing. "David had done pretty good with what we had," he says, "so I say, 'I'm going to bring you a little money so you can claim a few.'" Lasater likes this part; he starts to smile before the finish. "So I brought him a hundred thousand, and he 'bout to die."

But Vance did not blow his shot. Not long after he got to work with a bankroll, he claimed a horse named Gage Line for \$17,000 and won more than \$100,000 with him. After that, says Lasater, "I started chunkin' it in." His stable won \$335,000 in purses that first year, 1971; \$756,000 in '72; \$1,498,785 in '73 to lead the country for the first time; and the record \$3 million this year just past. Besides Vance, there are two other full-time trainers—Gordon Potter, usually in the East, and J. R. Smith, who handles the Midwest—plus Goose Heimer, who is Vance's assistant. At any one time Lasater may have up to 165 horses, with 75 or so in training. He has one main farm of 1,500 acres in Ocala, Fla. under the direction of Cotton Tinsley, and a 180-acre farm at Goshen, Ky., which is headed by Neil Huffman and used mostly for breeding and rehabilitation. On the strictly business side of things, Lasater has substantial interests in cattle, commercial real estate, a paper company and a manufacturing company.

But racing is his devotion. Some racing people even suggest that Lasater's is just a vanity operation, that he has so many expenses he is only breaking even,

the great purses notwithstanding, Lasater won't discuss the ledger himself. "The two things I'd just as soon not talk about is profits and taxes," he says. But even if he has been taking some losses, he has done so with a purpose. These past two or three years have been only the introductory phase of a long-term plan that will eventually show a greater emphasis on breeding, where the money is, and quality horses, where the prestige and money is. Lasater is not diverted by his fancy gross, he is strictly a bottom-line man. When people ask Nelson Bunker Hunt, one of the wealthiest individuals in the country, in the world, why he has gotten heavier into horses, Hunt quotes Lasater on the subject: "I wanted to get out of the stock market and into something sensible."

This year will show the first substantive change in the Lasater stable: his own stock will be coming to the races in force. His first homebred ran in '73; significantly, it was a stakes winner, Honky Star. In 1974 only three of his 2-year-olds reached the races, but this year up to 25 2-year-olds will be in training. There are 35 yearlings gimboling in Ocala, and 50 Lasater mares are in foal (including one each to Secretariat and Riva Ridge) with the future colts and fillies of the 2-year-old class of '77.

Until now he has never had an outstanding stakes colt, and the stable has succeeded mostly by pecking the opposition to death in cheaper races. The top national money stables seldom have been claiming outfits, although a few years ago the Marion Van Berg stable was regularly the leader with claimers. But Lasater overwhelms a card, sometimes running in almost every race, day in, day out. It must be exasperating to go against him. Responding in the way they know best, Philadelphians amiably boo Lasater horses, win or lose. Not long ago a good jockey came to Lasater and begged for a chance to ride. "The big red L is just getting to me," he said plaintively. In the East, where racetracks dot the landscape like Burger Chefs, Lasater may stable the bulk of his horses at one track, say in Jersey, but spot others down the road, in Pennsylvania and Maryland, vanning horses around from track to track to find the right race. Plus the bunch in Chicago. There was a time this fall when Lasater was the leading owner, by far, at

*continued*

**In Alabama, an atheist  
is somebody who doesn't  
believe in him.**



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## Run it up continued

Sportsman's Park, Monmouth and Keystone, and so were his trainers and his No. 1 jockeys.

When you first hear Lasater talking about his stable, he sounds exactly like someone else, a type outside of racing. Who is it? Well, it is a football coach, talking about depth and weaknesses. If Lasater and Vance come to a track and see that the racing secretary is scheduling distance 510,000 claiming races and lots of 2-year-old maiden filly sprints, well, they will go out and get themselves a \$10,000 distance horse and some maiden fillies, precisely as a coach short of linebackers and offensive guards and wide receivers will draft and trade to fill those gaps. "Yeah, that's right," says Lasater, "and what I really want is the halfback, the big star."

Charles Cella, the president of Oaklawn, which is Lasater's favorite track, says, "Din is the first thoroughbred owner to come along who keeps cheap horses, medium-priced horses and some good horses, and who also has good, firm connections, with an eye toward developing the very best horses."

The finchpin to all this is Vance. "I don't pretend to be no trainer," Lasater says. "David does the miracles." Withdrawn, nearly cryptic at his place of business, Vance will sit on his stable pony, Ronnie, for hours every morning, watching silently as the horses flow by, exercising—his own horses and those from other stables. Occasionally, he will spit. Lasater has come out at times and stood by Vance for minutes without obtaining so much as an acknowledgment. "Let me tell you about David," Lasater says. "It was pouring down rain yesterday morning, but from 6:30 to 11 he was sitting on his pony out there looking at horses. He ain't in the kitchen drinking coffee."

Vance has total recall when it comes to identifying horses. Working out in the morning, horses don't wear names and numbers. It helps if you can tell them apart. Lasater, who has to ask the grooms to identify his own horses in his own stable, is somewhat in awe of Vance's memory. "One time I was standing out on the track by him," Lasater says, "and this other trainer brings a horse out and David says, 'Well you finally got that horse back.' And the other guy couldn't believe it. Look, it was

two years since that horse had bowed. He hadn't been on a track in two years, and David took one look and remembered that horse."

"David don't just attend to his own business," says an admiring caddy.

It is in the solitude of the mornings that Vance mostly decides what to claim. He likes to find honest old horses he thinks can be brought back to form. "The best thing for me is, I have this man lets me do what I think's best," Vance says. "I don't get woke up nights asking me why I do things. I can just go out on the track and watch. You see a lot of things out there if you just look. You see a horse three, four days running, you can get familiar with him, and you think you can see how you can get him to win for you."

Claiming is the ultimate in brokering. The man who trades stocks buys individual issues, but his decisions are influenced by the whole market trend. The price of pork bellies and grain futures are likewise affected by such future variables as weather and union disputes, which simply cannot be factored into an equation. Real-estate speculators can look like geniuses because they know where the interchange will be built. Horses are something else again, no excuses. If you make a mistake and claim one who can't run as fast as you thought, then you have got yourself one slow horse is exactly what you've got. Down through American history, it became a badge of praise; the highest acclaim you could pay a clever man was to call him a horse trader. David Vance is a horse trader.

The rules of claiming are clear but subtle, and they must be played like tax loopholes. Mainly, if you take a horse, you cannot run him again at that same selling price, or lower, for 30 days. If, for example, you claim a horse for \$10,000, you must run him in a race for more than that price—probably for \$12,500—or you must give him the month off, just eating and sleeping. Since it costs about \$1,000 to keep a horse for a month, it behooves you to claim one you feel pretty sure is underpriced. For \$1,000 you could have some time in Puerto Rico for yourself.

Vance calls this month "jaal," and the trick is to make money with the horse while he is still incarcerated. "All I'm interested in is getting one win," he says.

"Some guys move a horse too far up the ladder when he's in jail. They'll run a \$10,000 at 15, 16. By the time that horse gets out of jail, he's been beat so bad he's lost his confidence, and he can't even win at the 10 you bought him for. Now, on the other hand, if you claim a horse at 10, and he wins for you in jail at 12-five, then you have them. Hell, you can come back and run at seven-five. You'll probably lose him to somebody else there, but in the meantime you can't miss picking up the purse, so you're still ahead. Just give me the one win."

Of course, how Vance gets the one win is something else again. Darrell McHargue, the intelligent young man who rides Lasater's best animals, comes into the track kitchen at Monmouth—which everybody at the races always pronounces without the *n*—Mamuth—with his agent, Harry (The Hat) Hasek. They get some coffee. "David's pretty well within himself," McHargue says. "Sometimes he's just got me bewildered. There's a lot of trainers that just train physical. That's all they know. David works on a horse's head, too. He outsmarts him and gets him training right."

Lasater comes over with a cup of hot chocolate. It is just past dawn, and Vance is already up on his pony on the track, sitting and spitting for a few hours. Around the stables, at the kitchen, things are coming to life. People are congregating. Lasater says hello to a bunch of people. He is one of those who can stay out till four o'clock drinking Crown Royal whiskey, and then be there at the track at 6:30, quarter of seven, looking like he went to bed with a glass of hot milk and some cookies right after *The Waltons* went off. Lasater likes the morning at a track better than the afternoon, when the strangers, the tourists from outside the gates, come around and clutter up his place.

Of course, a racetrack is different from a small town in one important way. It is more throbbing, rawer. Because everybody is betting all the time, fortunes change and hopes are higher, whereas the poor people in the small towns are almost always poor, and their prospects are not especially keen. At a racetrack, no matter how tapped out you are, you believe you're always just one big tip away from a score. A lot of people on the backside shovel good money at the

continued



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## Run it up continued

iron men every day, but at least some of it comes back occasionally, and that's reason enough to remain a citizen backside.

In the kitchen, over where Lasater got his hot chocolate, a big sign says:

EAT YOUR BETTING MONEY BUT DON'T  
BET YOUR EATING MONEY

—The Frenchman

It is an interesting note of caution, even though it so happens that The Frenchman responsible for this piece of advice happens to run the track kitchen at Mammoth and is, therefore, mainly looking out for No. 1.

"The first thing you've got to remember," says Goose Heimer, Vance's assistant from Sioux City, who chews cigars, "is that nobody's around a racetrack who doesn't bet. That's the way it is at a racetrack." Among the grooms in Goose's charge are Tiny, who is the biggest 'un in the whole outfit, Guns, Pop-eye, Worm, Rooster and Snake. "I have very little trouble," Goose says. "You see, human nature bein' what it is, you're going to bet on yourself. Well, this outfit wins more than any other, and so the people who work for it win. Remember that about racetracks. A lot of people forget that when they're trying to explain things."

"This outfit has unison," Harry the Hat says.

"It all runs to the boss," McHargue says. "Your two most important things are your agent and your outfit."

Lasater says, "All my people just want to be the best. It's even said in a way, because these people I have are so good at what they do, they're the best at it, but it's almost like that's all they care about in the world. They're not comfortable outside the track." He shrugs, somewhat baffled, for he is a very comfortable person himself.

"This is a good business, and a lot of people haven't had the success or the luck we have, but my people work hard being the best. Every time we run, we try to get the money, and if we can't win, we'll go for second, and if we can't get second, we try for third. But it is not just the money. I'll tell you something, the more you win, the better it is. That's what I've found out about this business."

Run it up a little.

END



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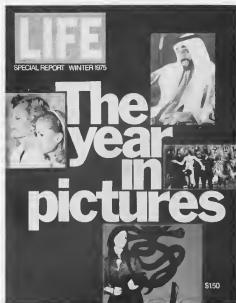
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# FOR THE RECORD

A roundup of the week Jan. 12-19

**PRO BASKETBALL**—**NBA**. The expansion New Orleans team was in a miserable slump, losing 10 of its first 10 games to Houston and Seattle—with Phil Pate Maravich scoring 42 points, making 17 assists and free-throw 10 rebounds in a 112-106 win over the SuperSonics. With a grand total of five wins the last-place Jazz won 210, minus behind Central leader Washington. The Rockets' Mike Henderson held Rick Barry of Atlanta leader Golden State to a season-low eight points while scoring 12 himself as the Rockets romped 129-101. Bill Walton (20) scored just five free throws in Portland's 119-81 victory over Cleveland, but had 13 points and 11 rebounds in the rout game, a win over Houston. The Rockets were blamed by Atlanta leader Boston 123-104 in the Blawie (Clem) Civic Center, the first of three Celtic "home" games to be played in the new arena. Injury-plagued Buffalo won a game behind Boston, but began the week with a 114-101 thrashing of the Celtics before 13,777 fans in Madison Square Garden. The New York Knicks, struggling on a road trip, took a second early lead but the Chicago Bulls 104-91 before a capacity crowd. The Knicks' Earl Barkley scored 21 points, while Walt Frazier added 25 points apiece. Detroit cameback to lead the Midwest Division by 16, games although it lost only Phoenix during the week. Kansas City-Oakland fell to last, and Milwaukee rebounded up to third by beating Philadelphia and Golden State. Boston's Guard Tom Henderson scored 36 points as Atlanta bombed Washington 108-83. Los Angeles, which did not play, got some good news when Coyne Russell resigned attorney. The East beat the West 108-100 in the All-Star Game.

**NBA**. New York's John Frowie, the only unanimous selection in the league's upcoming All-Star Game, duplicated his versatility as the Nets beat Kentucky 108-93 before a Nassau Coliseum crowd of 12,113. Signpost of the season The win moved the Nets into first place in the East ahead of the Celtics as Frowie had game highs of 40 points and 11 rebounds, made four steals, a pair of assists and blocked a shot. The new night the Nets squeaked by Harlem Virginia, which also lost to the Celtics in the week. The third-place Spirits of St. Louis defeated fourth-place Memphis, which, like the leaders, landed late in the off-season rebounding and scoring in a 111-106 Indiana victory over the Nets. Milwaukee, the league leader, added another 25 points while grabbing 22 free throws. San Diego's Terry Grant talked 29 points in a 121-107 win over Washington. The Celtics held Boston 2-2 in the week. The Nuggets' Mark Conner scored 30 points off as Denver waltzed Memphis 126-104 for its 24th straight victory at home. Second-place San Antonio ended the week nine games behind Denver despite a 3-0 midweek. The Utah Stars, 13 games to the rear, beat Indiana 125-118.

**GOLF**—**JENNIFER MILLER** won his second tournament in two weeks, first a 25-hole pro 26 to win the PGA's Dick Martin-Tucson Open.

**KATHY WHITWORTH** shot a first-round 73 to beat Sandra Post 144-142 and earn \$15,000 for winning the 36-hole LPGA Triple Crown tournament in Miami.

**HOCKEY**—**NHL**. Chicago's Great Wingers, an 18-year-old rookie, had his greatest from Detroit's Czechoslovakian band when he scored the winning goal in a 2-1 home win over Detroit's Division leader Vancouver. Earlier in the week the Black Hawks ended the New York Rangers' eight-game victory streak. The Rangers' Steve Nishitani won over Minnesota and the Canadiens and tied California. Philadelphia, the Patrick leader, flew off to a 4-0 romp, sweeping four goals in a game in wins over the Stars, Kansas City, Washington and Atlanta. The New York Islanders won 4-1, Toronto Toronto, tying St. Louis and defeating Detroit 5-1. The Buffalo Sabres held onto the top spot in the Adams Division as they beat Vancouver twice and Montreal 4-0. Boston's suspended Dave Froese was charged for an unsportsmanlike assault with a dangerous weapon (punch 10), the best his teammates could do without him was to tie the Pittsburgh Penguins, the leader of the Norris Division, beat Washington and the Bruins. The Los Angeles Kings also defeated Boston.

**WHA**. Indianapolis promoted its first home game with Cleveland as "Quarantine War Night," promising to provide a free ticket for the next game if each fan who showed up should the league team lose. The Racers met the guarantee before a crowd of 10,785, winning 4-2. New England stayed atop the East Division, picking up a pair of victories. Houston, the best in the West, blasted Edmonton 9-2, while the Oilers rolled over Phoenix 7-2. Toronto beat the Aeros, and led the Roadrunners 5-3, but left early. Quebec won three games in a combined score of 17-3, including a 4-2 spanking of Vancouver. Michigan had three wins, including for the sake of an uncertain financial status, and Winnipeg lost its only game. Chicago beat Minnesota 2-2, and San Diego had three close wins.

**HORSE RACING**—**RICKS BET** \$54,200, ridden by Mike Brown, threaded his way between horses in the stretch to win the winter-long \$12,000 Hollywood Stakes at Hialeah (Jan. 4) in 1:19. **HONEY** \$17,418 at 66, Daniel Meléndez Jr., won \$20,474 Hialeah Handicap at Garden State Park, covering the six furlongs in 1:12 1/4.

**TENNIS**—**ROD LAYNE** won \$12,000 for beating Arthur 6-3, 7-3 in the final of the CBS Classic, at the Palm del Mar resort in Puerto Rico. Jimmy

CONNORS defeated West Germany's Karl Meier 6-4, 6-2 in the final of the German International Open at Newport to earn \$15,000.

**BILLIE JEAN KING**, playing her last singles match on the women's tour, won the \$25,000 Virginia Slims tournament in Dallas, defeating Lynn Cheney 6-2, 6-3 to earn \$15,000.

**TRACK & FIELD**—**STEVE SMITH** set a professional world indoor pole-vault record, clearing 18'2 1/4" at the first pro track meet of the season in Montreal. **ERIC HAYES** set a world indoor high-jump record with a leap of 7'3 1/2" in the Meet of Champions at Roseland, N.J. The previous record of 7'4 1/2" by Valer Brumel in 1961 was the sport's longest-standing indoor record. The following night at the Suffolk Invitational in Los Angeles, Smith improved his record with a 7'5 1/2" jump. At the same meet, **DAN RIPLEY**, whose best before last month was 59'3", won the pole vault with a world amateur indoor record of 18'1" and **FRANCIE LABRIEU** set a women's world indoor record in the 1,000-meter run 1:46.23.

**WRESTLING**—**FORMED**. The professional WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION, with six proposed franchises. The league is slated to begin play in 1975-76.

**INDUCTED**. Into the professional football Hall of Fame, **ROGUEWELL** (BROOKLYN), New York Giant defensive tackle (1934-43), **GEORGE** (CLEVELAND) Chicago linebacker, offensive and defensive tackle (1946-55), **DANTE LAVELLE** (CLEVELAND) and **LENNY MOORE** (Eskimo) halfback (1938-47).

**SHINED** **TED MARCHIBORDA**, a three-year contract as head coach of the Baltimore Colts. For the past nine years he served as Coach George Allen's offensive coach with the Los Angeles Rams and Washington Redskins.

**SHINED** **HARMON KILLBREW**, the fifth leading home-run hitter of all time, to a one-year contract with the Kansas City Royals. In his 21 years of baseball (14 with the Minnesota Twins) Killbrew has hit 539 homers and compiled a .314 batting percentage.

**DIED** **WILL SPENCER**, 26, from myocardial infarction in a car accident on his way to the Grand National stock-car sprint at Riverside (Calif.) International Raceway.

**DIED** **ALVARO PINEDA**, 29, the second-leading pitcher in the Santa Anita center, fatally injured when his baton struck in the starting gate, at Santa Anita Park, Calif.

## CREDITS

4—Gory Bombardier, 11—Victor Blattstein, 12—12—Fred Linton (first loss), 13—Hans Linton, 14—12—12—Toulan Black Star, 15—Hans Linton, 16—17—45—Hans Linton, 24—27—14—September 44—14—Hans Linton, 50—Hans Linton, 45—Columbus (1).

## FACES IN THE CROWD



**CYNTHIA HAYDON**, a senior at Seton Hall (Mass.) High, who was center-forward on the field-hockey team, scored 23 goals to break a school record set in 1975. Also, she is No. 1 on the tennis team and is undefeated in 43 straight intercollegiate league matches.



**PAUL SOUZA**, an eighth-grader at Capt. Nathan Hale School in Concord, Conn., scored 40 goals, including five in one game, and had 15 assists as he led his 21-1 team to the Northeastern Soccer League and Connecticut State Junior Soccer championships.



**RAY BURSE**, a Rhodes scholar from Hopkinsville, Ky., and first American black to compete in an Oxford vs. Cambridge rugby match, played with Oxford in a 16-13 loss. The all-round athlete, a Centre College grad, lettered in basketball and ran the 100 in 9.6.



**PATRICIA BARTON**, of Chester, W. Va., was the leading jockey at Woodward Park in final meeting of 1974, winning 54 races. Her career total currently stands at 642 wins. She has also had 65 seconds and 671 third on 5,110 mounts over a five-year period.



**SOCORRO RODRIGUEZ**, an eighth-grader at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in San Ysidro, Calif., and an outstanding volleyball setter and setter, has led her team to an 80-3 record and the San Diego Parochial League championship the past four years.



**LEWIS BLAZE**, a Louisville accountant, just missed becoming the 10th person ever to bowl two consecutive perfect games. Competing in the Indian Trail Singles Classic, Blaze rolled off 23 strikes, then left a seven pin standing for a 299 in the second game.

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Mustang II Mach 1  
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Maverick 2-door Sedan  
Options shown: Bumper Guards, White sidewalls

## NATIONAL CHAMPION

Sir:

You say the college bowl games proved nothing from the perspective of the AP voters (*Top of the Ladder, with a Bow*, Jan. 13). On the contrary, the bowls proved to our "63 media types"—journalist types like John Underwood—that no team in any bowl was in Oklahoma's class. Of course, the fact that the University of Southern California fell behind and thus was forced to go for a two-point conversion obviously proves it was better than Ohio State.

You make a big thing of the fact that Oklahoma "barely got by" Texas, which "was crushed by" Auburn in the Gator Bowl. Is Underwood aware that the Oklahoma-Texas game is like no other in its intensity? Is he aware that Texas admittedly did not prepare very hard—no contact work at all—for Auburn? I shudder to think what would have happened to the Longhorns had they prepared as nonchalantly for Oklahoma as they did for Auburn.

And Oklahoma led Baylor "only 7-5" in the fourth quarter. Well, Penn State led Baylor only 17-14 in the fourth quarter of the Cotton Bowl game after trailing at the half, so what does that prove? And it's interesting to note that Ohio State "was only one point worse" than Southern Cal. Unfortunately, the Buckeyes were three points worse than Michigan State back in November.

Do the "other, sounder reasons to esalt USC" include the fact that the Trojans were 10-1-1 to Oklahoma's 11-0, or even Alabama's 11-1 and Michigan's 10-1? Since when is the national championship decided on New Year's Day? It is decided by the season as a whole, and 30 minutes of greatness against Notre Dame and a two-point conversion against Ohio State cannot erase the fact that USC lost to Arkansas and tied California. True, Oklahoma was "not given the chance to lose on New Year's Day." But Oklahoma was given 11 other chances to lose and didn't.

HERSCHEL NIKERSON  
College Football Editor  
The Associated Press

New York City

Sir:

Let's see now, the Southern California Trojans deserve the national championship because 1) they beat an Ohio State team that was defeated by Michigan State; 2) they lost 22-7 to an Arkansas team that was beaten by Texas 38-7 and Baylor 21-17; 3) Oklahoma won only 16-13 over Texas and 28-11

over Baylor; and 4) coaches know more about football than sportswriters and sports-casters.

I think I get it. Oklahoma's undefeated season is a tough swallow for John Underwood, *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED* and the coaches voting on the UPI poll.

MIKE EAKIN

Evanston, Ill.

Sir:

Congratulations. I vote for SI as the bravest sports magazine in publication. It takes real guts to print a feature story on a national-champion football team that has a loss to Arkansas and a tie with California.

Oklahoma did just squeak by Texas and had a slow game with Baylor. Those magnificent Trojans couldn't seem to win their close ones. John Underwood should have done more research on the word hogwash and paid less attention to UPI.

DREW WILCOXEN

Norman, Okla.

## MUHAMMAD'S MOUNTAIN

Sir:

When I first read your Dec. 23 story naming Muhammad Ali Sportsman of the Year, I thought it a fair choice. As you said, the man has fought tremendous odds to regain the summit of his profession, which certainly gives him a legitimate claim to the honor. But after watching the Ali-Foreman bout on television, I must protest. While it is true that Ali is now the best in his field, one look at the situation of boxing will tell you that this is not enough. The bout was dull and unexciting. Ali did not defeat Foreman's strengths, he exploited his weaknesses, which were glaring. As Ali protected himself against the ropes, Foreman completely wore himself out, flailing futilely at Ali's arms, and by the eighth round seemed to have all the energy of a dshrag. After that, Ali needed only a short flurry of blows, the fight's only exciting moment, to put the "champion" away.

As I watched this exhibition, I could not help but wonder how Ali's strategy would have worked against a truly great boxer. A Joe Louis would never have worn himself out with useless punches, and a Rocky Marciano would have crumbled Ali's defense with punishing blows by the third round. Yes, Ali is the best, but he is the best in a sport that no longer deserves the attention it is receiving.

GUY FRANKIE

Amherst, N.Y.

## HOOFBEATS

Sir:

Contrary to popular belief, one detail of your article on Jockey Chris McCarron (*The Apprentice Is a Sinner*, Jan. 13) is not entirely correct. The high school Chris attended is not in Dorchester, Mass., his hometown, but in the historic north end of Boston, from which another famous gentleman also set out on horseback.

DONALD DEFEQ

Medford, Mass.

## AVIATRIX

Sir:

Your story on Marion Rice Hart (*Flying in the Face of Age*, Jan. 13) was superb. It is quite a thrill to read about someone who has accomplished as much as she has in a lifetime. Along with many members of the aviation community, I have followed her travels over the world with keen interest via *Air Facts*. She has contributed a great deal to aviation.

E. W. SCHMIDT, M.D.

Pecos, Texas

## MISSING INGREDIENT

Sir:

In the SCORECARD item "Sweet Smell of Failure" (Dec. 9) you discuss a research report "issued by the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics of the University of Montreal" concerning the effects of sugar consumption on the performance of an amateur hockey team. To my request for a reprint of the report, Dr. Estelle Mongeau, acting director of the Institut de Diétiétique et de Nutrition, replied that "this study, if it exists, does not originate from our department" or the physical education department and "efforts to retrace its origin have been so far unsuccessful."

I hope that you will direct me to the true source, if the report does exist, or else explain why a fictitious research paper was quoted in a periodical as reputable as *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED*.

ANDREW ARNOLD

Boston

• Our apologies. The unsweetened truth is that SI, along with the University of Montreal and several Canadian newspapers, was the victim of a hoax.—ED.

Address editorial mail to *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED*, Text & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020.

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